THE WAY OF THE BAR:

A POSTMODERN APPLICATION OF

NIETZSCHE'S METHODOLOGY

A Dissertation

by

B. GARRICK HARDEN

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

December 2009

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ABSTRACT

The Way of the Bar:

A Postmodern Application of Nietzsche's Methodology. (December 2009)

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This study is an attempt to combine Nietzschean thought with postmodernism (already greatly influenced by Nietzsche) to take what I am calling a "pastiche approach." I do not mean pastiche in the strictest sense of the word as simply a hodgepodge of various things with little connection to one another but as a combination of modernist schools of thought, such as the structuralists, with various postmodern and poststructural "schools," such as those strains of thought coming from figures such as Jean Baudrillard, Jean François Lyotard and Jacque Derrida. I am also referring to various methodological approaches, such as ethnography, historical comparative, textual and content analysis and positivistic approaches. These approaches are used in concert in order to paint a "portrait" from a stance of Nietzschean perspectivism of barworkers as people operating in cultural patterns both local and global.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

CHAPTER Page

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND METHODS

This dissertation began one summer several years ago when I decided to put in an application to work at a local bar. The area called North Gate that stands just across the street from the campus of Texas A&M University was close to my apartment, the hours worked for me since I tend to be up nights anyway and I had (as I quickly discovered) a slightly romanticized idea of what it would be like to work in a bar. I soon lost my romanticized notions and realized the difficulty of barwork. I worked at that bar for a year and a half before the late hours began to interfere with classes I was taking at the time. Early on in my tenure as barworker, I noticed the rich sociological material occurring around me and decided to conduct an ethnography. The ethnography continued to grow as I worked on it during my free time between classes, an assistantship and work at the bar and I realized that there was too much material for just an ethnographic approach or to do justice to the topic in an article. As I continued my studies into social theory, cultural sociology and methodology, my approach to and thinking about the study began to change greatly. Ostensibly, this dissertation is composed of two main parts; the "manifest content" surrounds issues of identity in barwork across such seemingly divergent topics as popular culture, historiography, ethnography, social theory, cultural sociology/studies, social psychology, technoscience, race/ethnicity and gender/sexuality; what can be described as the "latent content" consists in a different approach to methodology. This approach, en facie, appears to be a

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This dissertation follows the style of *American Sociological Review*.

bricolage or pastiche piecing together of already worked out methodologies; it is much more, however, it is an exploration into some of the various ways people have approached sociological questions not only methodologically but also, and more importantly, epistemologically. The approach I am taking is a Nietzschean one of "play," perspectivism and "gay science." While many scholars have focused on Nietzsche's notions of will and power and his theoretical influences on postmodern/structural "schools of thought," the methodology in his perspectivism is largely ignored. Part of the difference between "traditional" sociological approaches to methodology and Nietzschean gay science then is in methodological theory, part of it is hermeneutical and part of it is ontological. This approach to methodology is also to be found coming out of debates of the relationships between individuals and society and the changing nature of social "structures" or "patterns" in postindustrial societies—in other words postmodern/poststructural discussions.

Empirical research has occupied a large part of the field of sociology since Auguste Comte but recently empiricism (in all its varying degrees) has come under strong criticism by postmodern critics. Now, neither this methods section specifically nor the dissertation generally is an attempt to rescue empiricism *per se* but to explore the possibility of synthesizing postmodernity and empirical research with the expressed purpose of having an in depth dialogue on identity constructions by barworkers and patrons. What follows could be divided into two parts: the first deals with criticisms of empirical research (both quantitative and qualitative) as well as some of the methods proposed by others to rectify the apparent problems (these other methods also set a

framework for what I will propose as I draw off these other attempts); the second further sets the stage for a pastiche approach that also, in contradistinction to a strict reading of the word "pastiche," focuses on, not necessarily social structure, but cultural patterns (borrowing, in part, from Ruth Benedict in *Patterns of Culture*) within postmodern approaches where many different methods and perspectives will be engaged to enter into discourse with readers and writers of the varying texts. The proposal here being that approaching a postmodern world through a stance of multiplicity while simultaneously acknowledging broader cultural patterns in what might otherwise be described as a "circulation of fictions," may be beneficial to sociology as a discipline (and not just postmodern/structural "schools" of thought) in creating more encompassing, less "centered" and authoritative worlds.

Varying Problems and Others' Solutions and Contributions

Many social writers have commented on how many departments have become factionalized over the perceived divide between quantitative and qualitative methods (Hammersley, 1992; Clarke, 2005; Atkinson 1990). Some have also commented that this infighting is ironic because whether one uses numbers or words to describe what they are doing, it is still basically the same thing:

> The current idea seems to be that if one uses pencil and paper, especially squared paper, and if one uses numerical symbols, especially Arabic notation, one is using quantitative methods. If, however, one discusses masses of data with concepts of 'more' or 'less' instead of formal numbers, and if one indulges in the most complicated correlations but without algebraic symbols, then one is *not* using quantitative methods (italics in the original; Lundberg, 59-60; found in Hammersley, 161).

People from both sides of the methodological divide would most likely dispute the above claim on several viable points. In regards to postmodern critiques, however, the criticisms can often apply to both sides equally. This poses a problem of categorization; postmodern analysis/research is often lumped in qualitative methods when it takes an empirical slant (see for instance the work of James Clifford, George Marcus[particularly their work *Writing Culture* (1986)], Ruth Behar, Deborah A. Gordon [of special interest is their response to the above mentioned work in *Women Writing Culture* (1995)] and Stephen Tyler to name a few) but if methodological problems exist in both is there any way to create something new that defies categorization? If something new is proposed, and it does not include the use of numbers, would it not be relegated automatically to the qualitative camp? The problem exists in labeling not in the sense that there needs to be more clearly defined labels but less clearly defined labels. Methodologies with porous boundaries, if boundaries need exist at all, would go a long way to opening up new and interesting possibilities rather than grouping people off into warring faction (as the song goes, "nobody's right if everybody's wrong"). As such, in this part of the chapter, I am going to lay out some of what I believe to be important postmodern criticisms of methodology as blanket criticisms for empirical methodologies in general.

Most of the postmodern critique of empirical methods centers around two basic accusations: empirical methods are oppressive and presumptuous (Clarke, 2005; Atkinson, 1990). Empirical methods come out of modernism and comes replete with the intellectual baggage of modernism. The researcher was a privileged authority where what he/she wrote was almost taken for granted. This is, at heart, the difference between

Zygmunt Bauman's "legislators" and "interpreters" of knowledge. Knowledge was centered (around a bell curve for instance) and voices on the fringes were considered unworthy of attention or if they did somehow creep into the data they were removed as outliers (Clough, 1992). Postmodernists have argued for an end to authoritative texts with such notions as "death of authors" and have challenged the authorities with pointing out the destructive and oppressive forces of "gazes." The death of the author implies that text is written not by authors but by readers of texts where the understandings and perceptions of readers is given priority over any question of authorial intent. For example, Paul Atkinson (1990), in his book *The Ethnographic Imagination*, took many "factual" and "literary" examples out of their respective contexts and placed them side-by-side; in some instances he combined them as a whole. The points, as I read them, were that we rely on style oftentimes to tell us whether to "believe" what we are reading and that often style can be constructively deconstructed to make an entirely different point from the words committed to paper. Further that we impose meaning or sense onto what we read (such as a Zen Buddhist Koan) even if the words strung together "are absurd." In other words, the meanings we derive are not located in the words we read or hear but in us. "Gazes" refers to the effect of normalizing and constricting behavior through the naming categorizing and judging stare of those considered in authority. These criticism are not at all comprehensive and these and more are further developed throughout this chapter.

The purported goal of the criticisms by postmodernists is a freeing up of voices previously not heard or marginalized as well as a shifting of the centered knowledge to

decentered knowledges and the destruction of any center whatsoever. Patricia Clough (1992) argues in her book, *The End(s) of Ethnography*, that the act of decentering is an end in and of itself not a means to any other end. As she quotes Derrida (94):

> Every sign, Linguistic or nonlinguistic, spoken or written…, as small or large unity, can be cited, put between quotation marks; thereby it can break with every context, and engender infinitely new contexts in an absolutely nonsaturable fashion. This does not suppose that the mark is valid outside its context, but on the contrary that there are only contexts without any center of absolute anchoring.

Postmodernity calls for a rejection of past oppression, a destruction of the monolithic and hegemonic, a freeing of silenced voices. This can be seen on one hand as empowerment for oppressed and marginal voices on the other as nihilism (discussed below).

At its base, the questions being posed here are epistemological. Few would argue in defense of "pure objectivity" or a "unified subject" at this point in history; American sociology, however, over the past one hundred or so years (from Comte to Wittgenstein to Skinner to Giddens), has moved away from theory and philosophy to a predominance of positivistic and scientific methodologies. The root assumption is that "truth" is "out there" to be discovered by the scientist. While most would acknowledge that truth is contextual, complex and multi-faceted, many would still argue the *location* of truth is in some external "real world." Some of the problems caused by postmodern theories for sociological methodology are to be found in questioning this base assumption. The very distinction we draw between methods and theory is problematic here as part of my project is to look at this epistemological question of methods through the lens of theory. Let me be clear here: I think of myself as a theorist not a

methodologist. As such, my self-conceptualization within my discipline of sociology is a limit as that self-concept presupposes the distinction between theory and methods I am attempting in this project to deconstruct. I am contending that meaning is created by social scientists both through their own internal cognitive processes as well as through interactions that occur between researchers "in the field," discussions with fellow scholars, consumption of cultural artifacts and lived day-to-day life in general. Meaning is not "discovered" but created in these interactions.

Robert Nisbet (1976), in his work *Sociology as an Art Form*, makes a crucial observation for the current discussion:

> It occurred to me a number of years ago while I was engaged in exploration of some of the sources of modern sociology that none of the great themes which have provided continuing challenge and also theoretical foundation for sociologists during the last century was ever reached through anything resembling what we are today fond of identifying as "scientific method." I mean the kind of method, replete with appeals to statistical analysis, problem design, hypothesis, verification, replication, and theory construction, that we find described in our textbooks and courses on methodology. ...What also occurred to me in my explorations was that close affinity these themes in sociology had throughout the 19th century with almost identical themes in the world of art—painting, literature, even music—and, far from least, the close affinity of the sources of motivation, inspiration, and realization of these things. Sociology and art are closely linked (3-4).

Nisbet goes on to argue that science and art are similar to one another epistemologically and both make up parts of sociology. The problem is that art has slowly been lost in American sociology to the dominance of "the scientific method" as described by Nisbet above. While many postmodernist, as mentioned above (and this is not to imply that Nisbet is postmodern at all), reject methodology out-of-hand; the potential, however, that I see in postmodern theory

is a move back to the artistic aspect of sociology (though the approach is through deconstructionism) and, furthermore, to encompass the scientific within the artistic. In other words, this project is an attempt at an alternative perspective on sociology as art/literature/fiction and a deconstruction of the theory/methods boundary with a move towards pastiche and/or hybridity.

Grounded Theory enjoys a prominent position in the social science both in the realm of theory and methodology and is important to consider here. In her book, *Situational Analysis: Grounded Theory after the Postmodern Turn* (2005), Adele Clarke argues symbolic interactionism and one of its progeny, grounded theory, are "always already around the postmodern turn;" she posits, however, situational analysis as both a theory/methods package and an example of a possible furtherance of postmodern influence on symbolic interactionism and grounded theory.

Clarke focuses on the social theories of symbolic interactionists such as Mead and her late mentor, Anselm Strauss. She maintains that these theories are always already around the postmodern turn in that they focus on heterogeneity, relativity and marginality (though these theories are constructivist not deconstructivist). She also uses Foucault's concept of discursive analyses and genealogies of the present to explain her theoretical foundations for situational analysis. Clarke, however, also argues that grounded theory has yet to go as far as it could around the postmodern turn by its "recalcitrancies" against the turn. She maintains these recalcitrancies to be five-fold: that grounded theory assumes *a priori* that researchers give voice to marginalized people, are able to simplify social phenomena, see instances as single rather than

multiple social processes, see contradictions and complexities in data as being "negative cases" and look for a kind of "realness" or purity in grounded theory.

Clarke proposes six ways to push grounded theory around the postmodern turn. She argues that researchers are "situated" within a particular culture and time and this comes with its own bag of assumptions and perspectives and the "modest observer" motif of the scientific revolution with "*his*" claim "papa got a brand new bag [of objectivity]" is not only naïve but impossible. The past assumptions of the scientific revolution are hegemonic, totalizing and fascistic—this connection is also why some scholars have dated the end of modernism at the end of WWII because of the dependence of fascists on scientific knowledges (Bauman, 2003; Lyotard, 2002). Thus grounded theorists need to recognize their situatedness within culture as well as, Clarke adds, as bodies; that is, researchers are human just as those they would "study" are human. Research is conducted within a particular situation and this situatedness needs to be the ground from which theory springs. Thus, grand theorizing is at best useful only in a historical sense as situations are fluid and dynamic thus impossible to contain within a single grand scale theory. Situations are collections of perspectives, which are then linked with other situations; grounded theory here becomes relativistic and hence not grounded in the "traditional" sense.

Clarke also recommends an embracing of heterogeneity and complexity and an overcoming of grounded theories' aversion to contradiction. The time has passed for the "normalizing" of the positivists' era; that dynasty is crumbling as its foundations rot away with the move of Western culture at large to postmodernism—the ground is rich

with potential theories. She also argues for a different form of operationalizations: using sensitizing concepts rather than definitive concepts. The shift is be significant as she claims the former is a kind of road sign pointing out a direction to understanding instead of the latter, which is the focus of commonalities between different things. Clarke also suggests situational maps of human and non-human entities in order to "capture" the complexities of social phenomena. Her final way to push grounded theory is to embrace the postmodern claim "all is text." Clarke's contribution to the discourse at hand is important. Though I disagree with her approach with situational maps because I think they are not entirely sensitive to postmodern critiques about structured representations being an oppressive act on discourse, I think her focus on sensitizing concepts is useful because it allows language to flow (whereas in a strict postmodern sense dialogue becomes stilted due to constrictive language that implies modernist baggage) and I have attempted to incorporate these concepts into the present paper and will also use them in my proposed dialogue on identity construction. Furthermore, Clarke's insistence on researchers using their experiences and backgrounds as data is important and liberating. That research can blend with researchers' quotidian lives allows for deeper expression of topics being studied as researchers are allowed to discuss what they "know" of their topics and not merely what they were "told"—thus allowing a deconstruction of "knowing subject" problems posed by postmodernists.

Norman Denzin (1989) proposed a version of empiricism that takes into account postmodern cultural turns that is different than Clarke's; he called his method, "interpretive interactionism." Interpretive interactionism is reliant upon thick

description and interpretation as well as a visceral understanding of subjects of research on the parts of ethnographers. Though not postmodern in and of itself, Denzin's approach, coming from one of postmodernism's influences, Clifford Geertz, approaches an interlocutor focused ethnography or, in other words, towards collaborative meaning construction and an opening of voices otherwise hidden under more modernistic approaches to ethnography. As such, I attempt, in part, to employ these approaches to ethnography in my chapter "Identity Construction in Bar Work" where I not only conducted open-ended interviews but also take a job in a local bar in College Station for two years working and partying with fellow barworkers during that time.

The three foundations of interpretative interactionism are blended into one another and are aspects of the same thing even though Denzin treats them as separate. Thick description goes beyond reporting just "the facts" of something to describing the historical, social and cultural contexts of a given phenomenon. Thick description contains "the seeds" of thick interpretation. Thick interpretation requires a deep understanding of the phenomena described; ethnographers must "learn to listen" to what people are saying in order to "get beyond" the manifest content to the latent meanings and interactions occurring in phenomena. The required deep understanding is more than a cognitive grasping of concepts and includes an emotional connection with whatever subject is at hand. As an example of this connection, Denzin tells a story about an ethnographer who dismissed headhunters' explanations of their headhunting as being a result of grief until his wife died. The ethnographer's own grief allowed him to

understand the headhunters' descriptions through the shared emotional understanding of bereavement.

Denzin, as a structuralist, differentiates between several different types of thick description that he argues are "good": relational, situational, biographical, biographical situational, macro-historical and interactional. Each of these implies slightly different types of thick interpretation and connections that are required. For the purposes of a pastiche approach to identity constructions in bars, these different methodological types will be useful and will be integrated, in part, into each of the different approaches taken. Importantly, to use approaches drawing from interpretive interactionism, a discussant would have to "go native." The implication of emotive connection is that the gaze emanating from the label "researcher" is deconstructed not through some abstract discursive analysis but through the very emotions and bonds the ex-researcher creates in concert with ex-subjects.

Another possible track for combining empiricism and postmodernity comes from Michel Foucault. Foucault took Friedrich Nietzsche's call in *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1989) for scholars to do genealogies[1] of morality and knowledge and made a career of the practice. Foucault has done many genealogies on topics from prisons to sexuality to human sciences. Working from the idea the (R)eality and (T)ruth cannot be said to exist let alone be captured by any field of study, Nietzsche and Foucault tell stories that blend humanities, arts, and historical texts to tell a story of where our culture has gone. Foucault has often been criticized for not being "historically accurate" but

[1] In the sense of studying the roots, influences and creations of various knowledges and how they relate to one another.

then why enter into a game where the outcome is bolstering a status quo that is exclusive, alienating and oppressive when there are so many other historical accuracies that are more open and humanized? In other words, nonlinear historiocities.

In attempting a move towards a postmodern empiricism, several problems arise. One of these is the empirical compulsion to categorize, label and codify. As Michel Foucault (1994) writes in *The Order of Things*:

> [N]atural history has as a condition of its possibility the common affinity of things and language with representation; but it exists as a task only in so far as things and language happen to be separate. It must therefore reduce this distance between them so as to bring language as close as possible to the observing gaze, and the things observed as close as possible to words. Natural history is nothing more than the nomination of the visible. Hence its apparent simplicity, and that air of naïveté it has from a distance, so simple does it appear and so obviously imposed by things themselves (132).

The practice of codification has the effect of "knowing" the object being labeled. It is the process of objectifying whatever is known. The knowing gaze is something entirely different from simply looking at someone or thing; it is "a new field of visibility being constituted in all its density" (*Ibid*.). But this knowing is an act of creation. The object being gazed upon is created by the gaze that labels it. So empiricism has the effect of destroying what is before it in order to create something it can "know" rather than understanding the original person or thing. To put this in context with the present discussion of historicity, our concept of linear history progressing from one epoch to the next is merely an illusion created by arbitrary categorizations that we then link together on a timeline. As Nietzsche puts it:

> Explanation" is what we call it, but it is "description" that distinguishes us from older stages of knowledge and science. I descriptions are better—

> we do not explain any more than our predecessors. We have uncovered a manifold one-after-another where the naïve man and inquirer of older cultures saw only two separate things. “Cause” and “effect” is what one says; but we have nearly perfected the image of becoming without reaching beyond the image or behind it. In every case the series of “causes” confronts us much more completely, and we infer: first, this and that has to proceed in order that this or that may then follow -- but this does not involve any *comprehension*. In every chemical process, for example, quality appears as a "miracle," as ever; also, every locomotion; nobody has “explained” a push. But how could we possibly explain anything? We operate only with things that do not exist: lines, planes, bodies, atoms, the visible time spans, divisible spaces. How should explanations be at all possible when the first turn everything into an image, our image! [Italics in the original] (Nietzsche, 1974, 172).

This then is the very crux of the problem according to postmodernist and critics of empiricism in general; once categorized, defined and then socially legitimated through scholarship labels take on characteristics transcendental to the creative minds that created them. This criticism is not merely levied at scientists, empiricists and positivists nor at academia and large is for that kind of mind forged in the fires of the Enlightenment, the industrial revolution and modernism.

A postmodern empiricism would have to take into consideration the problem of power when someone seeks to “know” something. It is not possible to completely satisfy this complication, however, as every act of research has some element of gazing involved. Participant observation, surveys even library research has portion of the gaze tied to it whether it is a memory of a person being written into a field journal (a kind of retroactive gazing) or the internalization of the gaze through filling out personal information on a form or benefiting from past categorizations and “knowledge.” Beyond admitting this occurs one possible way to alleviate the problem is to reflexively describe the process in which the gaze occurs.

For a study on identity, the objectification and normalization of the gaze has the doubled effect of making something dynamic and fluid static. When considering the other-directedness of postmodern citizens the fluidity of identity becomes especially highlighted. Another possible way to alleviate the problem is to approach identity from a standpoint of multiplicity; having as many voices and medium expressed as possible would mediate the dominance of the authors' normalization. Avoiding arbitrary categorization would further reconcile empiricism with postmodern criticisms. Language become difficult at this point as authors find themselves engaged in Denzin's thick description in every aspect of the writing process.

Jean Baudrillard poses particular problems for integrating empiricism and postmodernity because of his nihilistic stances—the dissolution of cultural and phenomenological boundaries makes the very concept of methodology problematic. One concept that he introduces to postmodernity that I will make extensive use of in my study is hyperreality. As Baudrillard (1976) writes in an article titled, "Symbolic Exchange and Death":

> Reality itself founders in hyperrealism, the meticulous reduplication of the real, preferably through another, reproductive medium, such as photography. From medium to medium, the real is volatilized, becoming an allegory of death. But it is also, in a sense, reinforced through its own destruction. It becomes *reality for its own sake*, the fetishism of the lost object: no longer the object of representation, but the ecstasy of denial and of its own ritual extermination: the hyperreal [emphasis in original] (found at: http://www.uta.edu/english/apt/collab/texts/symbolic.html).

As I discuss in two of the following chapters—"The Medium is the Bar Experience," where I ironically employ formal theory and statistical analysis to discuss the social effects of communications technologies being integrated into bar settings and

"Shifting/Shattering Epistemes," where I look use a form of historical comparative method to do a non-linear genealogy of the place of technology in American bars—television and the internet as well as other technologies have taken the hyperreal to all new heights now. Empiricism's most simplistic definition is the experience and observance of "reality" through the senses. Hyperreal then becomes the site at which empiricism and postmodern critique can be merged. The hyperreal is basically a simulacra reality we create[2] to replace all other realities. The hyperreal ends up becoming more real than the real where we effectively force the western philosophical notion of a mind/body dualism and then commit suicide by becoming nothing but minds. Baudrillard continues:

> Realism had already inaugurated this process. The rhetoric of the real signaled its gravely altered status (its golden age was characterized by an innocence of language in which it was not obliged to redouble what it said with a reality effect). Surrealism remained within the purview of the realism it contested - but also redoubled - through its rupture with the Imaginary. The hyperreal represents a much more advanced stage insofar as it manages to efface even this contradiction between the real and the imaginary. Unreality no longer resides in the dream or fantasy, or in the beyond, but in the *real's hallucinatory resemblance to itself* (italics in the original; *Ibid*.).

So were do we go from here? Baudrillard deconstructs without leaving anything in his wake but the pieces. The implications of his writings are there are no answers, only illusions that we create that then take on a life of their own independent of us. It would seem at this point in our discussion of epistemology and methodology we have come to an impasse—if reality is only an illusion of itself, how can social science continue?

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[2] Baudrillard argues, and I agree, that we create all of reality; the difference with the hyperreal is that it is simulacra or a copy of a copy without an original whereas before we created realities through illusion and simulation.

The issue is a bit more complex, though, as Baudrillard opens up more possibilities than had been previously realized under the flag of "pure science" and modernism as he argues that there is no difference between illusion and reality. In creating our illusions, we simultaneously create the world. While Baudrillard is talking in a general sense, this argument has profound implication for methodology in the social sciences; some have argued (such as Habermas and Giddens) that this means nothing can ever be said about society, I, however, contend that these critics miss the point—Baudrillard's argument does not limit possibilities for social research, quite the opposite, anything can be said about society, just nothing that is "True."

> So long as an illusion is not recognized as an error, it has a value precisely equivalent to reality. But once the illusion has been recognized as such, it is no longer an illusion. It is, therefore, the very concept of illusion, and that concept alone, which is illusion. This holds true for the subjective illusion, the illusion of the subject who opts for the wrong reality, who mistakes the unreal for the real or, worse, mistakes the real for the real (that illusion is quite a hopeless one). Against this subjective and metaphysical illusion: the radical illusion, the objective illusion of the world (Baudrillard, 2002, 51).

In this sense, social research becomes a study of social illusions and this opens potential, if embraced, instead of closing potential. An illusion-embracing methodology cannot be practiced while clinging to a sense of reality beyond illusion (in other words, pulling back the curtain reveals another curtain, not a wizard). Some may ask, "where does this lead? How can we know what is really going on?" to which I would respond there is nothing *really* going on but that does not mean there is *nothing* going on.

Baudrillard owes much of his ideas of reality, illusion and epistemology to his predecessor, Friedrich Nietzsche; his writings on these topics can shed more light on

how these issue effect methodology. Nietzsche argues that the "scientific revolution" represented the rise of a new kind of religion but one no less devoted to absolute truths and universal conclusions. Nietzsche talks of these new clerics of the church of science as laboring under a sick "will to truth" and "will to knowledge." These forms of general or collective will serve as the impetus for maintaining "old truths" and "discovering" knowledge that bolsters them while ignoring or "debunking" knowledges that contradict the old truths. Nietzsche moreover argues that knowledge and truth in general are made up from "errors."

> Over immense periods of time the intellect produced nothing but errors. A few of these proved to be useful and helped to preserve the species: those who hit upon or inherited these had better luck in their struggle for themselves and their progeny. Such erroneous articles of faith, which were continually inherited, until they became almost part of the basic endowment of the species, including the following: that there are enduring things; that there are equal things; that there are things, substances, audience; that a thing is what it appears to be; that our will is free; that what is good for me is also good in itself. It was only very late that such propositions were denied and doubted; it was only very late that truth emerged—as the weakest form of knowledge. It seems that one was unable to live with it: our organism was prepared for the opposite; all entire functions, sense perceptions and every kind of sensation worked with those basic errors which have been incorporated since time immemorial. Indeed, even in the realm of knowledge these propositions became the norms according to which "true" and "untrue" were determined—down to the most remote regions of logic (Nietzsche, 1974, 169).

Nietzsche is pointing here to an argument that he makes many times throughout his oeuvre in many different ways and is a direct link to later postmodern arguments: all knowledge and truth are illusions we have created. That is not to say that knowledge does not exist or that it does not allow us to manipulate the world around us; Nietzsche is highlighting that our religious crusade to discover immutable laws or reality belies the

realization that we collectively create these very laws/truths/knowledges that we claim to discover and then collectively *make* them immutable.

Nietzsche has often been accused of being a nihilist[3] unfairly (this is important to the current discussion as some may criticize, based on my discussion above on Baudrillard that I am taking a nihilistic stand as well—I do not intend to do so but instead throw in my lot with Nietzsche on this point); he argued that there are no ultimate truths "out there" but that we both individually and also collectively create truths and thus give our lives meaning—meaning which should, he argues, be taken seriously. We can create meaning through play and since a concept of Nietzschean playfulness infuses my proposed dialogue on identity construction I will take a moment to explain my reading of Nietzsche on this point. Nietzsche splits up humanity into three main groups, the camel (most of society—pack animals), the lion (a destructive force that can destroy but not create—many postmodernists) and the playful child (a creative force that can both destroy and create through play-the Ubermensch). The playful child is the type where Nietzsche's concept of play comes out most explicitly: "The child is innocence and forgetting, a new beginning, a game, a self-propelled wheel, a first movement, a sacred "Yes." For the game of creation, my brothers, a sacred "Yes" is needed: the spirit now wills his own will, and he who had been lost to the world now conquers his own world" (Nietzsche, 1995, 11). Play in this sense is a willful embracing of realities and worlds—perhaps innocent but not necessarily naïve.

Nietzsche also uses art often as an example of playfulness:

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[3] Because Nietzsche makes it clear that he does not believe in absolute or universal meaning or truth he is taken to mean he does not believe in any kind of meaning or truth.

> If we had not welcomed the arts and invented this kind of cult of the untrue, then the realization of general untruth and mendaciousness that now comes to us through science—the realization that delusion and error are conditions of human knowledge and sensation—would be utterly unbearable. *Honesty* would lead to nausea and suicide. But now there is a counterforce against our honesty that helps us to avoid such consequences: art as the *good* will to appearance. …As an artistic phenomenon existence is still *bearable* for us, and art furnishes us with eyes and hands and above all the good conscience to be *able* to turn ourselves into such a phenomenon. …We must discover the *hero* no less than the *fool* in our passion for knowledge; we must occasionally find pleasure in our folly, or we cannot continue to find pleasure in our wisdom. …We should be *able* also to stand *above* morality—and not only to *stand* with the anxious stiffness of a man who is afraid of slipping and falling at any moment, but also to *float* above it and *play.* How then could we possibly dispense with art—and with the fool? —And as long as you are in any way *ashamed* before yourselves, you do not yet belong with us (Nietzsche, 1974, 107).

Art can be read in many different ways and after the death of the avant-garde, almost any medium could arguably be considered suitable for art (Foster, 1998). Art as empiricism (in the most literal sense of the word "empiricism"), or vice-versa, opens up as a possibility with contingent subjectivities emerging over modernistic "objectivity." Approaching a subject artfully and playfully in this sense, to be unafraid to be foolish could provide us with a stance to be creative. In taking a pastiche approach I think it is important to play in this way with the varying topics and mediums in order to embrace the differing worlds and realities I will encounter and hopefully help to create.

One more perspective that is influential to a pastiche/hybrid approach to identity construction is Erving Goffman's (1958) dramaturgical approach. Goffman took theatre as his creative starting point (as Nisbet remarked, etymologically, "theory" and "theatre" share the same Greek root) and argued there are two basic aspects of self: front stage and back stage. The front stage is "the presentation of self in everyday life" while the

back stage self is where the performance is prepared, rehearsed, etc. Groups of people such as barworkers or regular patrons develop codes backstage that are kept from audiences. These codes are used to create certain illusions for the sake of impression management and in order to control given situations.

> These features and elements, then, comprise the framework I claim to be characteristic of much social interaction as it occurs in natural settings in our Anglo-American society. This framework is formal and abstract in the sense that it can be applied to any social establishment; it is not, however, merely a static classification. The framework bears upon dynamic issues created by the motivation to sustain a definition of the situation that has been projected before others (*Ibid*., 239).

In embracing and helping to create realities and worlds with interlocutors one must enter the backstage and that pre-existed him/her and then help in its furtherance through the perpetual re-creation the fluidity those realities possess. The dramaturgical approach helps set a mental framework for people entering into dialogue with others and presupposes a kind of necessity for new comers to "go native."

A Pastiche/Hybrid Approach

For my study on the construction of identities around bar work, I propose to take many of the above issues into account by taking a pastiche/hybrid approach. This approach would allow for more voices to be expressed as well as a broader picture emerging from the varying mediums of representation by taking into consideration many of the various socio-cultural text surrounding the issue of identity and barwork. As some of the issues raised by postmodernity cannot be "answered" by empirical methodology because the issues involve questions of "ultimate" reality, a pastiche approach can at least mediate the effects by presenting many different dynamic realities thus highlighting

the issues at hand. In other words, it is not that each individual chapter contains a new way to approach methodology in and of itself so much as it poses a more relative, perspectival way of thinking about methodology. Thus, there are no "answers" to methodological and epistemological problems in social sciences offered in this project but a different perspective—one where social inquiry is done from a stance of art rather than science and portraits are painted not conclusions reached. The pastiche/hybrid approach also allows for several issues to be interwoven within the many different representations of perceived realities in the construction of identity. Power dialectics, gender, race, sexuality can be "played" with in the contexts of historical and contemporary texts further broadening the pictures presented by barworkers and patrons. So while a strict understanding of the term "pastiche" could not produce meaning, my use of the term allows for portraits to be created through cultural patterns.

Jason Beaubien (6/25/09) did a recent piece on NPR's *All Things Considered* titled, "Mexico City's Symphonic Cacophony" that can serve as a strong metaphor for the synergy between theory and methods and the parallels of a postmodern/Nietzschean approach to lived experiences in constructing bar identities in a postmodern culture. Beaubien says,

> Mexico City is a noisy metropolis of more than 20 million people, known for its colonial church bells and relentless traffic. But amid the noise, it's also a place where sounds have meaning. Millions of motorists rev their engines and bang on their horns. Dogs yap. Green Volkswagen Beetle taxis sputter. When I first arrived in the city, the noise was a bit overwhelming. I'd step up out of the subway and be hit by the yelling, the whistles, the bells, the traffic. But slowly, I came to realize that there is a social order to this cacophony.

The sounds of urban life as a chaotic symphony existing within a broader social order embodies what I am attempting to describe in this chapter. In this sense, by proposing a pastiche/hybrid approach, I am not throwing in my lot solely with postmodernists or poststructuralists but am doing a deconstruction of these boundaries between schools of thought, modernist and postmodernist as well as various methodological schools. A pastiche approach would create a dynamic and disjointed image much like what it is an attempt at reflecting. A pastiche/hybrid approach would not necessarily force arbitrary distinctions and categorizations but would allow readers to (re)create texts as they emerge in their varying readings of materials.

The impetus for this approach comes, in part, from Nietzsche's concept of gay science. Gay sciences, as proposed by Nietzsche, is also known by "perspectivism" as Nietzsche argues for an epistemological approach that acknowledges and embraces the impossibility of "completeness" or "conclusion" and instead proposes to approach any issue for as many different perspectives (not all of which are consistent) recognizing the impossibility of encompassing all possible perspectives. This form of relativism does not take the stance that all perspectives are equally true as Nietzsche jettisons the implied concept of "truth" necessary to make such a claim. Nietzsche (1989) discusses another form of the will to truth and the will to knowledge—these being healthy expressions of these wills—separate from those presented above where the "seekers of knowledge" are not content with old truths and constantly search for new ones. Nietzsche maintains that we live in illusions that we call truth and we can dig beyond these illusions (seeking other truths and knowledges) but we will never find Truth or

Reality beyond the illusions only new illusions. This is the "goal" (if that word can be permitted in this context) of gay sciences. Now, it does not mean that since we can never get beyond illusions that we live in a meaningless world—the illusions, for Nietzsche, are meaningful in themselves. These new truths are "deeper" truths than the re-presentation of the status quo. And, Nietzsche maintains, they are abundantly more interesting.

Another scholar whom Nietzsche influenced, Jean-Francois Lyotard (2002) takes the issue of illusion and epistemology another step. Lyotard's discussion of narratival versus scientific forms of knowledge demonstrates how modernistic notions of scientific knowledge construction has become postmodern narratival knowledge linked with more traditionalistic, premodern forms of knowledge construction. By narratival knowledge, Lyotard is referring to oral traditions of story-telling where pedagogy, social bonding and cultural production are wrapped up in the act socially legitimated story-tellers perform in changing and passing along their knowledges. Lyotard argues that science's preoccupation with destroying myths and stories for "empirical reality" was a doomed project as it ignored broader social contexts and insisting of the existence of empirical Reality. Thus science loses measures of social legitimacy when past and current studies are continually being contradicted (such as, for example, studies claiming the benefits of a drug followed by a recall of the drug due to other studies followed by a re-issuing of the same drug but for a different purpose following other studies, etc…). Lyotard does not argue that scientific knowledges lose all social legitimacy, however (we still believe in doctors and scientists in industrialized and post-industrial societies after all), but that

science becomes a kind of postmodern narratival knowledge (so a postmodern sick person may go to a doctor, a faith healer, an acupuncturist and a psychic surgeon). Lyotard's contribution to the present discussion is an opening up of what can be considered "science." This is one of the reasons I have still been using the term "social science" instead of proposing a term such as "social art." The inclusion of science into the realm of narratival knowledges presents science as a categorization with porous boundaries that is capable of encompassing art and gay sciences without necessarily ceasing to be considered science.

The modernistic form of science is concerned with making truth claims and coming to conclusions; the base epistemological assumption being that knowledge exists out in-the-world independently of socially constructed meaning. The approach I am taking here, however, proposes, as does Nisbet, to approach sociology and the practice of sociology is an art form not just a science. As Nisbet (1976) writes,

> The portrait too is a major form of sociological expression in the nineteenth century [the century Nisbet argues that sociology as we know it today began], though not often did the sociologists chiefly responsible, such as Marx and Weber, regard themselves as belonging to this genre. Suffice it to say that the portraits which do emerge from sociological writing—the *bourgeois*, the *worker*, the *bureaucrat*, and the *intellectual*, for example… can easily take their places with the work of artists like Millet and Daumier and with the memorable political and economic portraits given us by such novelists as Dickens, Kingsley, Thackeray, and others [italics in original] (68).

I too will attempt to approach sociology as an art form in this project and paint a portrait of bar workers as they live and construct their identities as a part of local scenes as well as national and global scenes in the past and present, across such social arenas as popular culture, race, gender and sexuality. The creation of art, in the sense used for this project,

is not an attempt at (T)ruth claims. As with Nietzsche's "illusions" and Freudian "delusions," just because something is created collaboratively by people instead of being "discovered" in-the-world does not mean that the creation is devoid of meaning. This statement seems obvious at first glance, but it is a source of much confusion surrounding Nietzsche (for example). Nietzsche is often categorized erroneously as a nihilist because he argued there is no ultimate or absolute truth or meaning; he does, however, argue that there is meaning—the meaning we create with other and individually (in this sense, the meaning does not have to be understood by others in the same way as the creators understand their meanings—art is again, an excellent example). This stance cannot serve as a nihilistic foundation but it can serve as a relativistic one. Art is not discovered in the world in the sense of objective truth claims and it is not only self-expression but also expression of collective wills. Art serves as an excellent example and metaphor for collaborative social creation of meaning. Most forms of art have a school, a tradition and/or a history. Each form is informed by the past and those artists who came before; art is organic and dynamic relativistic and never absolute. As far as this can be described in the sense of a pastiche or bricolage (though, of course, not all art is pastiche in a strict sense most artists borrow from and are influenced in the creation of their arts by others) approach to truth, this is my approach in the present project. As with my chapter, "Reel Life," this project is my attempt to paint a portrait, necessarily incomplete, partial, contradictory and in some respects jarring in its various angles and perspectives, of bars and barworkers without any conclusions or overly-particular attention to form.

Ultimately, I am deconstructing the methodological distinctions and arguing for a view of methods that allows for contradiction and inconsistencies as well as a fluid approach to social levels of magnitude and analysis. Barworkers/patrons do not construct identities in isolation or merely within the particular milieu in which they work and live. The particular discourses on identity I am interested in here change in the local as well as the global.

What follows is a brief discussion of each of the following chapters in the present project:

"Identity Construction in Bar Work –or- Dude, Where's My Self?"

In this chapter, I employ ethnographic methodology to look at how bar workers understand their sense of self in relation to being a barworker at North Gate. This is meant as both a look at bar worker identity as well as a critique of qualitative methodology. I use many different aspects of ethnography such as participant observation, questionnaires, interviews and observation. In this chapter, I break some of the cardinal rules of ethnography in an attempt to see the people I am interacting with as interlocutors instead of "informants" or "subjects" such as asking their opinions on the analyses I am making instead of trying to hide behind a façade of "objectivity." In parts of my interviews I approach bar workers with a predetermined set of questions and deviate little from these questions, in some I use a loose set of questions that are much more open ended but refer to the questions as a kind of outline and in others I simply talk with barworkers without any set plan for the discussion in mind. I argue that there is both a sense of community on North Gate between the bars and restaurants while also

having antagonistic relationships between certain bars and an antagonistic view of Bryan/College Station as well as the State of Texas embodies by TABC. I use a modified Durkheimian approach theoretically and argue that there are several levels of collective consciousness at work here at the level of individual bar, North Gate, the city and the state.

"A Reel Life Less Ordinary"

In this chapter, I begin with the observation made in my ethnography that many bar workers incorporate elements from movies about service industry workers such as bar workers, restaurant servers and strippers into their sense of self at work. One example being the playing of the "scrotum game" from the movie *Waiting* while at work (trying to make someone look at an exposed scrotum and then kicking the person who looks a prescribed number of times). As much of this aspect of identity is wrapped up in expressions of gender and sexuality, I rely greatly on feminist thought to analyze the cultural text of *Casablanca, Roadhouse, Showgirls* and *Coyote Ugly*. I argue that these movies are marked by displays of hyper-masculinity and latent homoerotica belied by manifest homophobia.

"The Medium Is the Bar Experience: Playing with the 'Will to Truth'"

In this chapter, I approach formal theory and quantitative methods ironically by codifying the ideas of theorists such as Jean Baudrillard, George Ritzer and Martin Heidegger. I begin with the proposition that people interact with technology more than

with one another in a bar that has televisions and video games instead of interacting with one another. I argue that mediatising bar experiences results in a lack of "authentic interaction" within bar settings. I formalize this hypothesis into propositions with subsequent derivations and run several statistical manipulations on how many times people were observed talking with one another versus watching television or playing video games in several bars. I mean for this to be more than a critique of quantitative methodology and ask what meaning is created through the study and how it is constructed through the use of quantitative methods. I also maintain, however, that while this is a critique of a particular methodology, that does not imply that there is no meaning here; it is more a question of how I create that meaning from a particular perspective rather than looking at the meaning as being somehow "discovered" within bar settings.

"Shifting/Shattering Epistemes: Authenticity, Social Discourse and Technologic Meanings in Taverns, Saloons and Bars"

In this chapter, I use a non-linear genealogical approach (in a Foucauldian sense) to look at the changing social meaning of bars and the cultural integration of technology in bars over the last 250 years of American history. Specifically, I focus on four epistemes: Taverns in the colonial era leading up to the American Revolution, saloons in the middle of the nineteenth century, speakeasies of the 1920's and bars after the 1980's. I argue that each period harkens to another historical episteme different from the one preceding it except for the bar after the 1980's as this episteme, I argue, is

something different and outside of history in this sense. Each episteme had bars associated with different social meanings usually connected with a communicative form of technology. In taverns, the technology was the printing press, in saloons, it was the six-shooter, in speakeasies it was repressive bureaucratic systems and in bars the technology is the hyperreal.

"Unfashionable Racism"

This chapter arose out a debate surrounding North Gate in 2005 concerning racist practices in the bars. I combine an historical comparative method with textual analysis of opinion pieces and articles published in Texas A&M University's student newspaper, *The Battalion*, to look at race in Bryan/College Station from the period of the New Immigration and the present arguing that both times illustrate a "Balkanization" in the area where racial identity is carved out violently. In the Nineteenth century, non-white immigrants (such as Irish and Italian immigrants) would actively participate and often initiate lynching blacks in order to claim whiteness. In the present, race has become a delegitimated identity (from the perspective of whites that now include people of Irish, Italian etc. ancestry) while barworkers claim that race "doesn't matter" at North Gate, there have been several acts of violence against international students, accusations of bars charging different cover charges for white and black patrons and bars posting dress codes that single out stereotyped markers of race (such as do-rags and sagging pants). I argue that many of the same social processes that were at work in the nineteenth century are still in operation in Bryan/College Station today; however, the barworkers are

operating at North Gate as "gatekeepers" to white privilege understood in terms of fashion. In this sense, barworkers act, from their perspective, as "fashion police" instead of "race police." In this way, race becomes de-politicized as merely a set of cultural images (so blacks are reduced to rap music and do-rags; Latinos to Mariachi bands and Taco Bell, etc.) commodified for consumption along a ranking of cultural taste (thus some races become fashionable while others are unfashionable—take for example proclamations of "black is in" after the election of Barrack Obama).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

While this overall project is a theoretical approach to issues of methodology, I also am studying many cultural issues surrounding bar workers that have been discussed in much past literature. In this chapter, I will discuss some of the salient research surrounding these issues and locate the literature within the larger theoretical and cultural patterns dealt with in much greater detail in the chapters that follow.

While this project is a discussion of larger theoretical concerns surrounding methodology it is also about a specific form of public space: bars. Any discussion of public spaces would be remiss not to at least mention the landmark work on the topic of public spheres by Jürgen Habermas (2001). In a nutshell, Habermas argues that the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were marked by a creation of public spheres (such as cafes) that served as an intermediary between private individuals and political forums. This is particularly salient to fostering and spreading political discontent such as in the cases of the French and American revolutions. Habermas contends, however, that the rise of consumer culture and particularly those forms of consumer culture characterized by communicative technologies causes a decline and eventual fall of the social importance of the public sphere. This is connected with a kind of disembedding from social and political action and can be described in terms of anomie and ennui. This is moreover connected with broader issues of the aesthetization of politics. I make a similar argument (though with a different focus) in several of the following chapters. The movement of technologies such as television, video games and wireless internet into

bars decreases what I refer to as "authentic social interaction" and marks a decline in the political importance of such public spheres as well as an overall loss of communal connections that such public spaces once strengthened and helped maintain.

There is a rich history of bars, taverns, saloons and cafes that I discuss in more detail in a later chapter but it is important to discuss briefly here in terms of the role of the public sphere in foster "communal" social formations. David Conroy (1995) talks about the tavern in colonial America as a place where otherwise strict social boundaries between classes and statuses become more fluid and informal. He relates the story of an altercation that occurred in Richard Hall's tavern in Boston in 1721 that led to instance of resistance to hierarchical social forms (such as a mariner who refused to bow to the Governor out of spite for the fight) (1-2). Conroy writes:

> This altercation in Richard Hall's tavern suggests the informality, the spontaneity of interaction in public houses. For a moment the records reveal colonists in a setting where authority is lax, where the sale of drink might prompt more open and unguarded expression. News of the incident affected Christopher Taylor so much that he aired his sentiments to anyone who would listen. In taverns men did not ordinarily sit according to their place in the local social hierarchy or merely listen to sermons and exhortations. Here there was at least the possibility for greater assertion in posture and conversation. And in drink men might abandon the constraints that governed interaction in most public situations and thus make taverns a fertile breeding ground for new possibilities in social and political relationships (2).

While we can discuss the American Revolution as being a bourgeois rebellion against feudal social organizations that formalized an alienating class system, we can also discuss the revolution as being fomented in a public sphere noted for its loosened authority of an otherwise strict social structure.

These social spaces have also been historically important to the maintenance of class identities. W. Scott Haine (1996) has written on the importance of cafes in the lives of working class Parisians. These cafes, rather than leading to social degradation and the degeneration of institutions of family, as was claimed by prohibitionists in America, served as a compliment to, not a replacement of, other social forms. Cafes in nineteenth century Paris were places where working class families could go together for interactions with and solidification of others of the working class. The cafes also served as a center for political discussion in terms of labor rights and the organization of labor movement activities. In this sense we see the social importance of these public spaces in maintaining communal connections vis-à-vis otherwise isolated urban lives.

Beyond class identities, as noted by historian Peter Thompson (1999), the prominent City Tavern in Philadelphia during the revolutionary period fostered and maintained a national identity of "American" through enforced social exclusion for those who did not support independence. The City Tavern, a favorite haunt of such figures as John Adams and George Washington, was a social sphere not only for expressing political views but maintaining political consensus:

> During the Revolution, the tavern's patrons went out of their way to stifle dissent and enforce political consensus. For example, the congressional dining circles at the City Tavern noted by George Read in 1775 and the marquis de Chastellux in 1780, reflected sectional divisions. But even after obvious opponents of independence had been banished from the tavern, social events were threatened by arguments over commitment to America's cause. In 1781 the managers of Philadelphia's Dancing Assembly, which then met in the City Tavern's long gallery, appealed to lukewarm patriots to stay away from their dances… (153-4).

Access to taverns then were used in this instance as a reward to enforce an identification with the newly formed American identity and considering the important social role taverns played in early America, being barred access would be a significant sanction to suffer.

Though Haine discusses the presence of family life in Parisian cafes and Conroy discusses the fluidity of otherwise strict social boundaries in taverns, bars as public spaces have been historically seen as male-dominated spheres. The Temperance Movement and the move toward prohibition, however, was dominated by female figures and can be read as an attempt to resist patriarchal social forms in the United States. As Ruth Bordin (1981) has written:

> Temperance became a cause that large numbers of women actively embraced, and women in turn became the most important force in the temperance movement. Also, by the 1880s temperance had become the issue that drew tens of thousands of women to rally behind general women's and reformist causes and demand a more equal share in the political process. Through temperance, which women saw as a protection on the home, women from many social and economic strata were caught up in feminist goals (3).

Temperance became a way of creating a feminine public sphere based on direct conflict with the male public sphere of place of drink. Some prominent figures in the movement took the position of taking down saloons and taverns in the Midwest by any means necessary. Carry Nation, for example, was renowned for taking a hatchet into bars to drive men away (Asbury 1929). In examples such as this, the attempted wresting of power away from the patriarchy was more than just identity politics or confrontations to symbolic orders of power but also a direct physical challenge to these masculine public spheres.

In contemporary Western society gendered spaces are still contested terrains. Third wave feminist scholars such as Donna Haraway and Judith Butler have written much on the carving out of spaces from which patriarchal cultural expressions can be challenged. There is a danger here, however, of co-optation. In the chapter below entitled "A Reel Life less Ordinary," I discuss the co-optation of feminine spaces by overarching patriarchal expressions in films such as *Showgirls* and *Coyote Ugly*. Elizabeth Marshall and Ozlem Sensoy (2009) have made a similar argument (though without the focus on psychoanalytic arguments found in the chapter below) in looking at the representation of normative gender roles couched within seemingly feminist narratives in the movie *Shrek 2*. Their basic argument is that while, on the surface, the movie appears to embrace ideologies of "girl power," it is presenting a normative view on feminine gender as being white and heterosexual.

Gender is a topic that comes up in several contexts within the present project and the role of women bar workers is a particularly salient issue. James Spradley and Brenda Mann (1975) conducted an important study on the role of the cocktail waitress in a college bar. As discussed above, Spradley and Mann also discuss bars as being masculine social spaces in American culture and argue that the presence of female workers in this "man's world" comes with certain normative behaviors that exclude women from social membership in the same ways as men. One example that they discuss is the rule about drinking before work. While it is common practice for the male barworkers to drink before work there is a clear expectation that the female bar workers will not drink until after their shifts are over. If a woman asks for a drink she is denied.

The researchers discuss an instance where a female bar worker jokingly denies a male bar worker a drink before work and the social sanctions and threat of exclusion she faces for drawing attention to the arbitrariness of the gender norms. The authors also discuss working spaces within the bar as being not so much a division of labor in terms of gender as being a division of geography. The female barworkers are kept in easy sight of the (predominately male) customers while the male barworkers are expected to work behind the bar. The researchers muse that were the bar owner to hire a female bartender and a male cocktail waiter they would be met with protest from both the men and women working in the bar. Thus the division of geography is central to constructing gendered identities in terms of barwork.

Bar culture and bars as social spaces are topics over which ethnographers have spilt much ink. One comprehensive ethnography of bars in San Francisco in the 1960's can be found in Sherri Cavan's (1966) *Liquor License*. Cavan looks at bar cultures as being open social spaces. By this she means that there is an expectation of sociability on the part of bar patrons and she argues that normative social barriers such as "civil inattention" do not apply in bar settings. She moreover argues that were one to attempt to avoid sociability in a bar setting it would require a good bit of work as even performances of isolation (such as reading a book) are oftentimes taken as invitations for sociability ("what are you reading?"). Also relevant to this discussion is William Foote Whyte's (1948) study *Human Relations in the Restaurant Industry*. In this work, Whyte analyzed the hierarchical organization of a restaurant and the relationships formed by the

restaurant workers which he described as being highly structured even while appearing informal.

For a more recent study on the topic, David Grazian's (2008) study of nightclub patrons in Philadelphia offers insight into the strategies people employ in order to "have fun" in face of "artificial" and materialistic social milieus. He argues that bar and nightclub patrons adopt personas of "the confidence man" and "a hustler" in order to gain access to more exclusive clubs and to make claims of status (claiming to have the status to be allowed admittance to more exclusive clubs). Grazian describes these behaviors more generally as being "sporting rituals" meant not only to gain access to social spaces but also to meet people such as potential sexual interests. Sarah Thornton (1996) argues that clubs serve as social arenas in which new cultural artefacts are legitimized. Countering Birmingham School cultural scholars who have discussed mainstream clubs as being artificial and destructive of original creative cultural expression, Thornton maintains that cultural expressions become authentic due to their presence within the clubs.

In discussing public spaces in America the question of access to these spaces is important. Poststructural sociologists such as Foucault and Derrida discuss intersections of domination. In sociology, we often discuss race and ethnicity, class, gender and sexuality and other social categories as though they were exclusive from one another and while each has distinctive aspects they are all deeply interconnected with one another and it is important in discussing these issues (particularly in terms of social access) to acknowledge the areas of intersection that contribute to the denial of access to groups

which fall along what Parreñas (2001) has discussed in terms of "axes of domination." While Parreñas discusses these axes in terms of the Filipina diaspora, the concept is drawn from broader social literature concerned with oppression and disenfranchisement connected with an interconnected multiplicity of social categories.

While past sociological literature dealing with race and ethnicity does not discuss these intersections in this language, it does recognize the phenomena. Work like Elliot Liebow's *Tally's Corner* (2003) discusses intersection of race and class and the creation of communal connections between people facing such dispossession; his later work, *Tell Them Who I Am* (1995), discusses connections between homelessness and gender. Another important study connected with this literature is Mitchell Duneier's (2001) *Sidewalk* where he discusses the marginality of homeless book vendors in New York. Interesting for the discussion at hand is Duneier's focus on contested public spaces and the constant fight these book vendors wage for legitimation in face of intersection of class and race. Of course no discussion of sociological literature dealing with these questions of intersections, community and public spaces can afford to leave out William Foote Whyte's (1993) classic study *Street Corner Society*. Whyte argues that in face of poverty and ethnic discrimination, people living in an Italian slum are able to create public spaces supportive of communal connections.

In terms of more recent research May and Chaplin's (2008) study of access to bars and nightclubs in downtown Athens, GA has particular relevance to my project. Over the course of several years May and Chaplin observed African-American bar patrons who were granted access to bars with dress codes aimed at denying access to

people giving expressions of hip-hop cultures through fashion (such as athletic wear, thick gold chains, baggy pants, do-rags) as well as those who were denied access. They argue that while race is a motivating factor the intersection of race and class is much more important than just issues of racism by themselves. They point to African-Americans who are able to "crack the code" and gain access through wearing middle-class uniforms of polo and button down shirts. This, they maintain, illustrates the complexity of access to public spaces in terms of cultural capital and codes of consumption.

May and Chaplin raise several interesting points on situations where people find themselves in what has been referred to by Gregory Bateson (2000) as a "double bind" as well as issues of cultural capital and questions of status in terms of the demonstration of taste. Bateson posits six characteristics for a double bind situation: 1. the situation requires two or more people to be involved; 2. it must be a repeated experience over time; 3. the situation must take the form of "[d]o not do so and so, or I will punish you" and "[i]f you do not do so and so, I will punish you" (206); 4. there must be an abstract contradiction between the two commandments; 5. an impossibility of the victim's escape from the situation and 6. the victim comes to expect situations to be double binds (206-7). The double bind in May and Chaplin's study as well as my chapter "Unfashionable Racism" is that these bars and nightclubs play hip-hop and rap music but deny access to people who demonstrate an affiliation with hip-hop culture through fashion. Howard S. Becker's (1963) study of "deviant social groups" speaks to this issue:

> Social rules [such as dress codes] are the creation of specific social groups. Modern societies are not simple organizations in which everyone

> agrees on what the rules are and how they are to be applied in specific situations. They are, instead, highly differentiated along social class lines, ethnic lines, occupational lines, and cultural lines. These groups need not and, in fact, often do not share the same rules. The problems they face in dealing with their environment, the history and traditions they carry with them, all lead to the evolution of different sets of rules. Insofar as the rules of various groups conflict and contradict one another, there will be disagreement about the kind of behavior that is proper in any given situation (15).

These conflicts would be only conflicts between groups with different social facts; when discussing these issues in terms of the double bind power is an important aspect. These conflicts are not between groups with equal social power but between middle-class whites and blacks who are presumed to be working class.

This intersection of class, culture and race opens up another aspect of Habermas' discussion of the decline of the public sphere in terms of the importance of material culture in a consumer society and the allocation of status in terms of consumptive tastes. An intellectual tradition looking at consumption in terms of status symbols comes from the work of Thorstein Veblen (1994) on the leisure class where he argues that Westerners live in a predatory culture that rewards invidious ranking processes connected with conspicuous consumption and waste of consumer goods and people (particularly the consumption of women by men). This kind of analysis of consumption becomes connected with semiotics through the works of Roland Barthes (1972) in later scholarship such as Jean Baudrillard's (2004) *Consumer Society* and Daniel Miller's (1987) *Material Culture and Mass Consumption* both of whom discuss the consumer as existing in a complex world of signs where he/she has to "correctly" navigate the status hierarchy of consumer items. Any discussion of consumption and status in terms of

cultural tastes must take into account the inestimable contribution of Pierre Bourdieu's (2002) *Distinction*. Bourdieu builds on Veblen's work discussing the maintenance of social power through the transmission of cultural knowledge and tastes and the subsequent legitimation of the social hierarchy through the emulation by lower classes of higher.

It is interesting to note changes in cultural interpretations related to issues of consumption. Veblen discusses how certain diseases associated with over-indulgence are associated with nobility and romanticized in terms of the status gained from conspicuously consuming; more recent scholarship on the over-indulgence in alcohol, alcoholism, highlights the stigmas and social-psychological affects surrounding alcoholism. Norman Denzin (1997) has done much work in this area. Denzin argues that the alcoholic experiences a "divided self" marked by feelings of self-loathing:

> The alcoholic and his or her other are trapped within an interactional circuit of progressively differentiated alcoholic and nonalcoholic conduct (schismogenesis) that transforms their relationship into a painful field of negative, contrasting emotional experience. If unchecked, this relationship moves slowly toward self-destruction (121).

In other words, the social and experiential worlds of the alcoholic are oriented around the cycle of drunkenness and sobriety that become seen as an expression of this divided self (the drunk self and the sober self). While I do not deal with alcoholism directly in the chapter that follow, Denzin's work is important to the current discussion because of the popular image of alcoholism that is associated with bar patrons (particularly the "regulars") and bar workers.

In conclusion, there are many relevant literatures for the project at hand and not all of them can be discussed in so short a space. Topics discussed in this project draw off not only many methodological and theoretical approaches but also various topics surrounding bars and bar workers. As such, the literatures looking at the history of bars and taverns in America, gender in relation to bars historically and in contemporary popular culture, the myriad of ethnographies dealing with bars and more broadly service industry work and literature on "axes of dominations" and intersections of disenfranchisement as well as scholarship on consumer culture are all salient to the issues discussed in the chapters that follow.

CHAPTER III

IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN BAR WORK

-OR-

DUDE, WHERE'S MY SELF?

If someone asked you what do you think of when you think of bar workers, the first images that came to mind would probably be out of popular culture. Scenes out of "Casablanca," "Roadhouse" or "Coyote Ugly" may come to mind; in other words, a whole host of images ranging from the romantic to the fearsome to the comical. But how do bar workers see themselves and how do they think others see them? Like many who have been clumped together under a single label, bar workers are much more diverse than the label implies. In considering Occidental culture, questions of identity and how identities are constructed are important to understanding postmodern cultural shifts. As Judith Howard (2000) states, "In current times,… the concept of identity carries the full weight of the sense for the need of who one is, together with an often overwhelming pace of change in surrounding social contexts—changes in the groups and networks in which people and their identities are embedded and in the societal structures and practices in which those networks are themselves embedded" (367-368). In this study, I look at how bar workers develop their concepts of identity within varying levels of social structure and how they perceive identity within, not only occupation but the other constructs (such as race, gender and sexuality) used to build these perceptions as bar workers as well as how they understand the impressions others develop of them as bar workers.

Methods

This study was conducted near Texas A&M University in Bryan-College Station, Texas in an area across the street from campus where there is a block commonly referred to as North Gate. North Gate is a tightly packed collection of bars with a few shops and restaurants scattered about the area. The college students and some professors use North Gate as a social haven where they can study, read and eat during the day and drink and socialize at night. North Gate businesses employ a good number of the city's residents as well as seasonal students. North Gate is an important part of life surrounding the university and so it is rich with potential topics for sociological study. Considering my research interest is people's impressions of their identities as well as how they perceive others' impressions of people in bar work, I decided using a qualitative approach was the best option.

I take the position that identities are fluid and dynamic and thus can be better described from a qualitative approach in order to allow people a wide range of possible expression so that identities can emerge as texts in interactions. I used two kinds of qualitative approaches: 1. interview and 2. participant observation. I had worked at a local bar in North Gate for two years; this allowed me a privileged position from which to conduct my research. By "privileged," I mean several things: firstly, I had gained some rapport by allowing the persona of "bar worker" to fall under the larger rubric of my identity thus being perceived by those I spoke with as "one of us;" secondly, in working at a bar I bypassed some, but by no means all, of the methodological issues of Heisenburg's Uncertainty Principle by becoming a part of the natural environment (*i.e.*:

my presence among those I was observing was taken as granted as a bar worker and former barworker allowing for more "natural" interactions among and between bar workers and patrons); finally, I was given greater access to the methods and procedures within bar work as well as the general structure between bar workers with workers inviting me to social events and discussing work related issues with me as can happen between co-workers.

When I began interviewing I decided to set up a structured interview where I could control the kinds of "information" my "informants" were providing. The structure I used was set up between the general and the specific as well as the benign to the potentially controversial (see Question Asked below). Instead of using the regular terms of "informant" or "subject" I refer to those working with me in reading the text of bar cultures as "interlocutor" in order to highlight the collaborative approach to researching a group of people.

Divisive Identities

I think it is important at this point in the paper to lay out the structural macro-level theory I found most helpful in my interpretation of bar workers' interpretations of their varying identities as those identities were embedded in a larger socio-cultural framework. Theoretically, I saw two connected, yet distinct, kinds of macro-level embeddedness expressed by workers: functionally, there were three different levels at which interacting collective consciousnesses were constructing, sometimes conflicting, identities through bar workers—the individual consciousness of the bar they worked at, the community consciousness of North Gate and the social consciousness of the city,

Bryan-College Station[4], in which they lived; culturally, I saw the expression of David Riesman's (2001) inner-directed and other-directed types (though these are employed in very different ways from Riesman's original usage and integrated into the analysis in the next section).

Most bar workers I spoke with would talk about themselves in very different ways depending on if the topic of discussion was the bar they were working at, North Gate or Bryan-College Station. Within North Gate, each bar has its own persona that is expressed through the décor on the walls, the kind of music they will or will not play, the architectural lay-out of the bar and the people they tend to hire. A manager at one of the bars told me many of the bars at North Gate stereotype people who apply for a job (though he added his bar does not). He continued by telling me some of the bars look for "the stereotypical pretty boy and pretty girl," some look for people who are politically conservative and some look to hire those with a more "new age" appearance in order to maintain the particular persona they are attempting to portray. There are two theoretical points of particular interest here.

First, the collective consciousnesses of these bars is an artificial one in the sense that collective consciousness is something that is emergent from a group of people through their everyday interactions and acts as a kind of group identity that is different than the individual identities making it up but if people are selected for their homogenized identities by a master designer, the collective consciousness is no different

[4] Often workers would use Texas A&M and its student body as representative of the city level consciousness. Examples of this occurred when a particular topic arose that dealt with issues of authority and power, the city and the University would be discussed in punitive and normalizing terms.

from each of its individual parts it is a simulacra collective identity because it is a copy but the originals cannot be said to be each individuals within the group. For example, if a man has a genetic clone of himself created and he and his partner call the child "son," the child would be a simulacra son. The second point is that the separate bars' identities are engaged in an insincere role playing that patrons "go along with" much as an actor in engaged in insincere roles that audiences suspend disbelief in order to enjoy. The difference between the actor and the collective identity of the bar is that patrons do not "suspend disbelief" in order to enjoy a bar. I have often heard patrons refer to a sense of belonging when they go into a preferred bar. This feeling of belongingness is that of the patron's sense of "true self" being embedded into what the patron perceives to be the larger "true self" of the bar. The bar's perceived "self," however, is perceived as authentic by deception and thus forces patrons' selves into a manipulative, inauthentic embeddedness—to force the patron to enter their perceived "true self" into a circulation of fictions (which then negates any sense of "trueness" about patrons' selves) against their knowledge (Goffman, 1963).

The processes of initiation into the varying levels of identities are different depending on the structural level of the identities as each level up becomes a further degree of alienation from one's fellows to the city level at which point there is little if any initiation. On the level of the individual bars, there is a degree of variability but they normally follow a similar pattern. At the bar I work at, there are five stages of initiation based on knowledge of the functioning of the bar; with each gain in knowledge and decision-making responsibilities, there is a corresponding gain in status and power (this

is however very subtle and informal until one reaches the final stage and the power is more to that point is more a gain in respect between individuals rather than an institutionalized, codified or routinized form of power).

The first stage in the hierarchy of barwork is "door-guy" which is based on gender as women are not allowed to "work the doors;"[5] door-guys are expected to check identification cards, decide whether to let someone into the bar and help with cleaning duties at the end of the night (which people at every level are expected to do). The second stage is the "swamper" which is also based on gender; swampers pick up glasses, clean tables during the course of the worknight and are responsible for deciding if a patron needs to leave the bar on account of aggressive behavior or a high degree of intoxication. The third stage is also the first one not based on gender, the "barback;" barbacks are expected to stock low items behind the bar during the night and clean glasses for those at the next stage, bartenders. Bartenders main job is to serve drinks and decide if a person will be served an alcoholic drink (depending on whether the bartenders think the ID card is real and the degree of intoxication). The final stage is the manager who gets formalized social power as managers make the work schedules and decide how to interpret the rules of the bar (whether one at another level can eat while on the clock for instance). Each stage is amorphous and does not have clear boundaries between the stages as door-guys who have been with the bar a period of time (managers decide how long is needed) will work both door-guy and swamper shifts while swampers, again after a period of time, will be allowed to work some barback shifts and

[5] More on this topic later

so on up the hierarchy. Now, there is one step above the manager but there is only one such position (besides the bar owners), the general manager or GM. The GM is described as the representative of the owners and has almost the same power as the owner (short of something such as taking money out of the cash register for personal use).

The next level of consciousness is North Gate as a community. I have often heard bar workers refer to having a sense of family among the different workers, bars and restaurants of North Gate. This sense of belonging to a community identity expresses itself in many ways. On the individual level, it is usually expressed through bending and often times breaking the rules of individual establishments as well as larger city rules. Workers often receive free food and drinks from other workers (granted that the worker is recognized as a part of the larger North Gate identity as the rules are different for new workers as they have not yet been "initiated" into North Gate). Minors who work at North Gate are oftentimes allowed to drink (provided it is not too risky such as if Texas Alcohol and Beverage Commission (TABC) officers are present) as described by Mary[6], a twenty-year-old bartender, "When you've worked around here as long as I have you know everybody, the door guys, the bartenders, they know I'm under but it's okay, 'cause, well you know, you work at a bar, we stick together for the most part and don't cause trouble for someone else wanting to have a good time." On the collective level, it is considered taboo to speak badly about any other bar in North Gate to someone who is not part of the community and North Gate bars will set aside any

[6] All the names in this study have been changed.

differences in order to combat an outside force (for instance North Gate fought the city when the council attempted to disallow drinking outside on North Gate; the community did, however, lose that fight and many still express resentment toward the city for the loss. After it was over the individual bars went back to petty sleight to one another like one bar refusing to loan towels to another regardless of a surplus while freely loaning towels to other bars, etc.).

Bob, a manager at one of the bars, clearly expressed a sense of community among the bars when discussing recent allegations made about some of the bars for discriminatory practices: "A lot of these people have a problem with us when they need to be talking with Austin not us. We don't make the rules but we have to follow them," implying that these allegations were emanating from a misunderstanding of state laws governing alcohol sales. Bob also, however, illustrated that the community was made of individual bars' identities whose cohesion was stronger than the that of North Gate as a whole when later in the conversation he stated, "Well there are some bars that are problems out here and we shouldn't all catch it because of a few, but, uh, well…" yet he went no further I assume because at that point my identity was perceived as "student" instead of "fellow barworker" and he did not want to break the taboo of saying something negative about another bar in front of someone outside the community (even one whose out-group status was only temporary).

The city level is paradoxical. The perceived level of embeddedness is different depending on the particular worker. Managers feel a part of the larger identity as they will discuss how much revenue North Gate "brings in to the community" as a point of

pride and discuss city plans for beautifying the area (this is also an example of the level of knowledge manager have as I had not heard any of the other workers discussing the extensive number of changes the city is planning). Manager will also focus on the beneficial reasons for having TABC: "TABC is a good thing, a good idea; the state gets a lot of revenue from bars they need to regulate them, make sure the, uh, that the shady ones aren't screwing around" (Bob). Though Bob also expressed some reservation about TABC coming into his bar as they make him "nervous" because they may find someone inebriated who slipped the notice of the barworkers and fine the bar for serving drinks to an intoxicated person. Barworkers lower on the hierarchy, however, express general disdain of city council and TABC often referring to the former as being "stupid" and expressing hatred toward the latter. The city-level consciousness for these barworkers is seen as a panopticon, an "all-seeing" eye, where it is impossible to know its gaze is turned. They see TABC as the occasional manifestation of this panopticon and express its effects in terms of control, power and normalization. As one veteran bartender, Gary, exclaimed, "Fuck TABC! Man, I hate fucking cops! You never know where those bastards are gonna pop up or what they're gonna think they caught you doin'…" In regards to the city-level consciousness, barworkers, other than managers, are anomic and their senses of identities are fairly well disassociated from the city-level identities.

One group that occupies interesting yet awkward social positions within the varying levels of social structure are barworkers who also consider "active student" to be part of their identities. I need to make a distinction here before I go deeper into the barworker/student identity conflict between "active student" and "potential student." I

consider students who are enrolled in classes either at Texas A&M or Blinn Community College[7]. Estimates on how large this group is vary depending upon whom you ask; I have heard barworkers estimate between "probably very few" to "probably fifty percent." Wherever along that continuum the "real" number is, the overwhelming consensus is active student are in the minority. Potential students, however, abound. I consider them to be the barworkers who have gone to college and left to work with plans to eventually go back to school as well as those who have not gone to college but plan to start eventually. As Joe, a potential student barworker said, "Yeah most bar workers have trouble in school and don't finish. A lot of times they come up here to go to A&M, start working in the bars with the late nights and the drinking so they start doing bad in school. But then they, they think, 'hey, I'm making all this money here at the bar,' and then they just quit school thinking they'll go back some time and never do; they get in a rut." The identities of most of the potential students are disassociated with the larger city identity in contradistinction to active students who have a vested portion of their identities in the city identity through the University or College.

Since there is such a high level of conflict between the consciousnesses of North Gate and that of the larger city, active student barworkers can experience a degree of alienation in both settings as well as torn allegiances. In an educational setting the identity of "active student" can be fully engaged and embedded while the identity of barworker, still present even though in the background, is alienated from the identity of

[7] I am including Blinn students here because of its location within Bryan-College Station and its close relationship with Texas A&M even though barworkers do not talk about Blinn in the same terms as they do Texas A&M: that is, as a powerful driving force on the city-level.

active student so that the student feels torn somehow (a simple example would be on sleep; barworkers grow accustomed to sleeping through the day and being active all night; it is very difficult to change sleeping habits by twelve hours to wake up and be at class at nine a.m. when the active student barworker is accustomed to waking up and being at work at nine p.m.). The torn identity of active student barworkers results in a feeling of partial anomie as the student barworker is not fully embedded in either collective identity.

There is an even deeper sense of disembeddedness for the active student barworker who attends Texas A&M because of the strong emphasis on the largely subsuming identity of "aggie" by other active students at A&M. I asked two barworkers to define what it means to be an aggie; the first, Rob, an active student at Texas A&M, said being an "aggie" meant students are a part of a larger family who went to sports event and participated in the traditions surrounding the event together and "every aggie has something in common—being an aggie. We all have the same traditions like muster for all the aggies who have passed in the last year and silver taps the first Tuesday of every month to honor all the aggies who've fallen in the past month." The second barworker I asked, Dan, is an active student at Blinn; his first response was "I don't know, man, I'm not an aggie, I go to Blinn… huh, well… like the honor code[8] I guess." After I pressed him further and asked how and if he thought North Gate figures into defining an aggie, he suggested the ring-dunking tradition[9] and told me one of the bars

[8] The "aggie honor code" states: "An aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, nor tolerate those who do."
[9] Where students who are about to graduate dunk their class ring into a pitcher of beer and then drink it as quickly as possible by themselves, catching the ring in their teeth and usually vomiting immediately afterward.

on North Gate sold "the second largest amount of beer, per square foot, in the world behind someplace in Munich."

These two examples of barworkers' perception of the identity of aggie are very telling. When one considers the degree of prevalence of aggie traditions and how the city of Bryan-College Station is subsumed under the identity of "aggie" (the very name of the city having "college" in it illustrates the identity's ubiquity) points to the sensitizing effect of even partial identity embeddedness to the signs that signify the identity. In other words, Rob was easily able to give a rich description "on the spot" of the meaning of "aggie" which was tied to the extensive aggie traditions. He could do the same for being a barworker. Dan, who could give a rich definition of "barworker" and thus whose perception of identity is disassociated from the larger city identity like his fellow barworkers who are also not aggies, had trouble thinking of a definition for such a significant object because the surrounding cultural signs of aggie identity had little, if any, signification for him. Joe put the disjuncture between the identity of "aggie" and "barworker" in starker terms: "There's a lot of pressure around North Gate with the traditions… well, hold on… no, not really 'pressure,' more 'presence'… Yeah there's a strong presence of aggie tradition on North Gate […] But the bar workers that make it don't normally get caught up in all that"—implying the depth of the chasm between the two senses of self. I posit that when two identities are in such confliction, it can cause a person to come to a point where he/she completely destroys one of their identities by dropping out of school (potential students) or quits working at bars (those who "don't make it" as Joe implied) or another possibility: the person's identities become so

shallow they drown and thus sociability in either world becomes fluid and more dynamic as the person becomes *one* malleable, fluid inauthentic role who can fit whatever identity the audience wants at the time.

Fluid Identities

In *The Lonely Crowd*, Riesman (2001) argues there have been several fundamental shifts in culture which he characterizes with three ideal types that correspond with three different socio-cultural which existed and exist in distinct spacio-temporal periods: tradition-directed, inner-directed and other-directed. A person who was tradition-directed "tends to reflect his membership in a particular age-grade, clan or caste; he learns to understand and appreciate patterns which have endured for centuries, and are modified but slightly as the generations succeed each other. The important relationships of life may be controlled by careful and rigid etiquette…" (Riesman, 2001, 11).

Inner-directed types emerge in a culture that provides a higher level of security for those operating within it. The inner-directed types reify society by looking inwardly "in the sense that [this inward direction] is implanted early in life by the elders and directed toward generalized but nonetheless inescapably destined goals" (*ibid*., 15). Riesman is then able to extend the analysis into the next shift, which occurred in the United States during the twentieth century. The last shift was to the narcissistic, child-like other-directed types. An other-directed type is "shallower, freer with his money, friendlier, more uncertain of himself and his values, more demanding of approval…" (*ibid*., 19).

Jean Baudrillard (*America*, 1999; *The Perfect Crime*, 2002) as the time after the perfect crime or the murder of "reality." He claims we now live in an endless circulation of fictions where we cannot tell the difference between illusion and "reality;" seeing the Great Pyramid of Las Vegas is no different to us than going to Giza (excepting, of course, that Las Vegas has the Eiffel Tower as well). Since we are narcissistic while simultaneously "uncertain of ourselves" we can pick up an identity, a simulacra bar identity for example, and when we tire of that fiction move on. As Joe told me, "Some of these guys come in here and you can tell they want to work in a bar 'cause they saw it some movie and thought it looked cool; they have this gleam in their eye. I'd say… about fifty percent make it and stick around."

Horkheimer and Adorno (2002) talked about the death of reality back in the 1940's when they claimed it was becoming more and more difficult when coming out of a movie theatre to tell the difference between what was experienced in the movie and what was experienced after the movie (126). They also took this a step further and claimed movies were a kind of real that seemed more real than the real or what Baudrillard labels hyperreality.

We Americans love friendly, shallow people circulating through one simulacra identity after another especially in a service industry outlet (is there anything in America left that still produces something material?) where people are friendly and tell us "have a nice day," just as they said to the last person and the one before that. We reward people greatly for this lack of authenticity as Mary pointed out, "if you're sociable you'll get regulars in there who take care of you, I have regulars who pay my car insurance; I

mean, not literally, I just have a couple who tip so well that their tips alone cover my insurance." Consumers of services even want to see barworkers smiling and being friendly as they are being thrown out as in Mary's contradicting thoughts:

> Well, you have to be very sociable very out-going and loud. If the bar's crowded and there's some big guy standing in your way or you have to kick him out you have to speak up and let 'em know you're in charge and you're not going to take any shit—you can't be timid. And we've got a lot of classy girls working at [the bar she works at] and that's what it takes, you know you have to let things roll off your back 'cause you get called a lot of things and people say a lot of shit to you but you just have to realize the situation and it always helps that you're sober and they're drunk—it gives you the upper hand. And you have to be sociable otherwise it just gets boring. You have to talk with people and not just go through the motions otherwise it just gets so boring.

What is she telling us about barwork here? Do not be timid, be loud, do not take shit, take insults because they are coming from drunks, and above all: be "sociable!" It seems strange that being "sociable" appears to be so anarchical.

Conflicting Identities

A great deal of discussion has arisen around North Gate within and between the varying levels of individual bars, North Gate as a community and Texas A&M's student body as representative of the larger community of Bryan/College Station about race and international students. Allegations have been made about certain bars in the school newspaper, *The Battalion*, claiming these bars will not let African-Americans (I have not heard any other racial minorities mentioned as having been victims of this) nor international students into their bars. There was very little variation on the story bar workers told explaining why such allegations were made: the student body president and a friend of his tried to go into a bar on North Gate while clearly intoxicated. The

door-guys denied them entrance. The student body president became irate and verbally abusive claiming they were being kept out due to race (at this point every worker who related the story to me added the qualifier almost word for word, "even though they were both white").

Soon after the incident, the president wrote an article for the school newspaper claiming bars on North Gate had racially discriminating business practices. Soon after the article appeared, however, another article was printed in the newspaper and "the truth came out" that the president was denied entrance due to his level of intoxication. At this point all but one ended the story and began discussing race on North Gate. Bob, however, began discussing the moral character of the student body president claiming he was abusing his position to use it in an attempt to "turn people against North Gate." Many workers repeated the same argument one of the accused bar's owner used in a *Battalion* article: 'It's our perspective that there are no problems what-so-ever,' [the owner of an accused bar] said. 'We met with concerned students and explained our dress code policy and discussed TABC laws. I felt that the meeting went very well'" (found at: http://www.thebatt.com/media/paper657/news/2005/09/22/News/Northgate.Bar.Accused.Of.Racial.Prejudice-994361.shtml?norewrite&sourcedomain=www.thebatt.com). As for the international students, when I spoke with bar workers they argued bars were held responsible for underage drinking and the only way to be certain identification card were valid was to accept only Texas ID cards so international students with identification cards from countries other than the United States were not allowed to enter bars as a matter of self-protection from legal troubles with the Texas Alcohol and Beverage

Commission. They also denied knowledge, "beyond rumors," of violence against international students.

Whether these stories are true in their totality or even partially I do not know. I do know something, or some things, happened on North Gate resulting in four articles being published in *The Battalion* and a host of letters to the editor that named three bars on North Gate as practicing discriminatory practices. Seeing the amount of discussion this incident caused I decided to re-direct part of this paper and discuss the functions of race on North Gate as a microcosm of Aggieland.

At first, it seemed to me during conversations with bar workers that it was important to them to present selves to seem as being "not-racist;" however, as I was discussing the allegations of racism with a group of barworkers who all emphatically claimed they did not discriminate, one, Ed, spoke up out of the group to make an analogy from when he worked as a waiter, "well, also they just don't tip well. Back when I worked at a restaurant, we used to call blacks "Canadians" as in 'goddamn it I got a table of Canadians' because we couldn't call them 'black' in case some one over heard and thought we were being 'racist' [at which point he smiled and scoffed]." At this point all the other barworkers in the group were nodding in agreement. I suggested to them maybe they were perpetuating the stereotype: they assumed the patrons were not going to tip well because they were black so the wait staff did not serve them thus causing the patrons to not tip. Again everyone in the group, including the original speaker nodded amid declarations of agreement. Then Ed spoke up again, "you're right, that probably happened. But then they were also loud, rude and tried to get everything

possible for free." Again nods and agreement…. I found myself in an other-directed merry-go-round where the people in the group were "shallow… friendl[y], more uncertain of [themselves] and [their] values, …demanding of approval" (Riesman, 2001, 19). The members of the group were performing for an audience and since what the audience wanted kept changing (between me and Ed) so too did the role players.

Another day I was talking to John, a Mexican-American barworker, and asked him if he ever thought about how few minorities worked on North Gate. He paused a moment and answered, "you know, until you mentioned it, I hadn't, but your right." He paused another moment in thought and then said, "well, but if you think about it, there aren't many minorities living in this town; I mean if you take away the athletic department and the international students, this is pretty much an all-white town." "That's a lot of people to 'take away,'" I casually replied. He thought a moment more, "Maybe…." I decided to change tracks, "What about the claims that North Gate is discriminatory?" He answered quickly this time,

> Yeah I've thought about that; what's going on there is those bars [gestures in their general direction] caters to that crowd. I mean, they carry Hennesey cognac and Cavacie and play rap music but then they won't let them in. Look here, we don't carry that stuff and we don't play rap so they don't come here and that's what other bars do too. But [names the bars this time] are asking for it if they cater to them and then won't let them in.

I asked him if he thought purposefully setting up a bar with one of the purposes being to keep minorities from coming in was not discriminatory. He responded, "Maybe, but I don't think so…" he then looked at me, apparently checking my reactions; looking for

approval perhaps? When I did not say anything but just looked back as though waiting for him, he continued with other-directed reasoning,

> It's not like we keep them out; they want to come in and they look sober and have valid ID they come in, no problem…. But over there [again gesturing at other bars] they have a dress code that's so they can keep people who look like they might cause trouble out. I mean, if someone walks up looking all thugged-out then they'll probably have a few drinks and start a fight; why else look like that? If a Mexican goes up there dressed like that they won't go in, hell I wouldn't want them to let him in looking like that; same for a white guy; it's not about color, it's about self-presentation, you gotta *look* good.

Later that same night I spoke with Bob and broached the subject with him. He responded in a careful, slow voice, "well, I can't speak for other bars; I can only speak for mine. I know here, if they don't look drunk and they got ID, I smile at them, say hi and they come on in. There's only one color I care about and that's green."

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2003), in his book, *Racism Without Racists*, argued that white Americans claim color-blindness while blaming the effects of racism on some characteristic of minorities and do not take minorities who "play the race card" seriously because they claim they do not believe racism exists. Bonilla-Silva takes a modernist approach in his book the general theme of which is whites attack minorities based on perceived "character flaws" and do racist acts such as overturn Affirmative Action laws by claiming "reverse racism" and denouncing such programs as anachronistic. From a modern perspective, his is a strong argument; however, I think there is another direction that can be taken with this issue in a similar direction as Bonilla-Silva but taking a slightly de-centered look at it. "Racism without racists" is a good title; once there were racists. They were inner-directed and sure of their values and beliefs one of which being

racism. Their kind murdered, beat and raped millions of Africans and African-Americans over the past six hundred years.[10] Now racists are dead and buried either physically or symbolically by being ignored by white America for being offensive to the palate. In our present narcissistic, other-directed, simulacra-obsessed culture, racism and race lives on as a sign without a signifier. It has been gazed upon by all kinds of "professionals" to the point where it no longer exists—its meaning has imploded.

W. I. Thomas reminds us things do not have to exist in order to effect us. Probably the cruelest trick played on the civil rights movement was a postmodern cultural turn because race and racisms' meanings may no longer exist but they live on as signs nonetheless. Just as all empty signs, they have been relegated to the realm of fashion so it is not about the color of skin it is about appearance most barworkers on North Gate will argue. In effect, it acts like racism; and if we lived in a modern society with a healthy sense of social justice, we could prove racism is occurring and have it stopped but we are unable to do this. Now racism is a fashion sense and appearance is sovereign. Thus, those who are charging minorities more to get into a bar or not allowing them in at all are not racists; they are fashion police. Their social critique of taste may smack of things many fought and died to stop for inner-directed remnants but any allegations made or explanations offered will be more of the same; more fictions, more copies, more seeming attempts on both sides to hearken back to a culture when things were "knowable" and "real." But even that we have to bracket those words off with the exoticizing, scoffing "" as though in even writing the words is a reading of

[10] I think this last line is very important; I do not want my argument to be misunderstood as making light of racism in any way.

their epitaphs speaks volumes. "So what now?" I often heard people say this in classes after finishing a book by Baudrillard; they always end proclaiming the arrival of ultimate nihilism. As far as North Gate's racism goes, I think the only way to fight it is to out-spectacle the spectacle. Look at the NAACP's website, they have the same idea, make diversity fashionable; present it with high-tech special effects and all the bells and whistles. Remove any remnant of authenticity's specter that it may still have lingering about it then wrap it up with a pretty bow because any appearance of authenticity just comes of like an act.

Expressing the Collective

Most cultures tend to have rituals and festivals in which norms are relaxed for a pre-prescribed period of time in order to reify those norms for the rest of the time. These rituals and festivals act as a release valve for deviant thoughts and behaviors within an acceptable social context. One example of this is given by Wesley Shrum and John Kilburn (1996) in their article on ritual disrobement during Mardi Gras. Bryan/College Station's version is shared throughout most Western societies: Halloween. Having both worked at North Gate during Halloween and interviewed many participants in Halloween 2007, I argue here that in a social arena where norms are already lax (i.e.: the bar scene) Halloween allows many of the kinds of cultural values that are kept to the back stage of performativity are brought to the fore thus reifying norms through exaggeration of local norms that would otherwise be considered deviant at such an overt front stage level of expression. Particularly salient themes revolved around issues of heterosexist patriarchy and race.

While I agree with the plethora of scholars who have argued that racist and heterosexist patriarchal values exist at national and international levels of conscious collectives, I further argue that each subsequent level of consciousness (meso and micro) give expression to these values in differing ways (Bonilla-Silva, 2003; Butler, 1993; Feagin, 2006; Hall, 2005; Haraway, 1997; 1991; Lin, 1995; Schiele, 2002; Smith, 1992; West, 1994). These cultural values can be seen in many ways in Bryan/College Station from the absence of statues of people of color around town and on the university campus to the ubiquity of "old army."[11] Though overt racism is frowned upon overt homophobia and sexism is still considered somewhat "acceptable" to a degree. Halloween, however, reifies these usually covert values are overtly expressed akin to the latent becoming manifest in psychoanalytical terms.

Halloween 2007 I went out to North Gate and observed costumes worn by people and conducted a series of short interviews (around ten minutes each). Much as Henk Driessen (1983) found in bars in rural Andalusia, many of the males were engaged in displaying identities associated with affirming masculinity and heterosexuality. Of the men who dressed in drag many expressed anger toward women in describing their costumes; as one young man told me he was dressed as a "sorority chick" because "they're all fucking skanks." This overt hatred towards women points to larger feelings of inadequacy in terms of sexual markets and is linked with expressions by other young men that their costumes, such as "rock star," were meant to attract the attention of young women (with whom they expressed a hope for a sexual encounter). On the other hand,

[11] This is a reference to a time when Texas A&M was a white males only institution and is invoked with pride by many of the students as well as the institution itself.

some men who were dressed as women were quick to point out that they were not performing gender but sexuality. As one male told me when I asked why he chose to dress as a cheerleader, "I'm not dressed as a woman; I'm a fucking faggot… not that I have anything against queers… gays, I mean; I like gays… but I'm not gay! … but I don't have a problem with gays…" The expressed homophobia bolstered with the confused statement of sexuality lends credence to Butler's point that heterosexism is a statement of a person's compartmentalization and de facto rejection of their own homosexual impulses. The more virulent the reaction, the more tumultuous is the internal conflict of sexual identity. This is connected with observed expressions of homoerotica couched within hyper-masculine behaviors among barworkers. For instance, after the 2005 release of the comedy *Waiting* about restaurant servers, many of the male barworkers began playing the game displayed in the movie where servers would try to trick other male servers into looking at their scrotums; if successful, the shower would kick the showee a proscribed number of times in the rear. The display of genitalia and the subsequent sadomasochistic response illustrates the identity conflicts of barworkers and patrons around gender and sexual identities. While these identities are fluid (Butler, 1993) the identity conflicts are attempts at building rigid boundaries around these identities thus making them static. The release of these "deviant" identities through Halloween and "machismo" rituals thus reifies the sexist and heterosexist norms around North Gate.

Furthermore, women's costumes fit within this analysis of hyper-patriarchal values in that, for the most part, young women were performing a kind of hyper-

femininity by highlighting their sexual attributes. While men were either displaying anger towards women or attempting to attract them, women tended to express an understanding of their costumes as sexual spectacle. When asked to describe their costumes most women used either the terms "slutty" or "sexy" as in "slutty nurse" or "sexy angel" in their descriptions. Women also tended to discuss their reasons for choosing such costume not in term of sexual markets but in terms of being noticed in general, to be gazed upon. Foucault's (1995) sense of gazes would lead to the conclusion that women are constantly under the gaze of the patriarchy whether in terms of fashion, consumptive behaviors to body politics women are constructed and molded by male gazes. Their identities are constructed for them externally and then imposed and internalized during continuous socialization on how to do "female" (West and Zimmerman, 1987).

Lastly, patrons also performed race in ways that both supports and contradicts my earlier argument on race as fashion. The points that contradict my earlier argument were the student who were invoking racist narratives in their outfits by wearing black face and coming as "pimps" or "gangbangers." These stereotypes point to an older modernist version of racism and while it is important here to point out, these costumes were not a focus of this section of my study. Many theorists around the postmodern turn have argued that we are not entirely postmodern yet but are quickly heading in that direction. Many other theorists have argued that each epoch exists fluidly and simultaneously with every other epoch thus it should not be surprising when atavistic cultural artifacts crop up. Much more important to my study would be instance where

patrons, mostly men, dressed as a particular person of a minority group (such as actors, musicians, etc.). One example was a young man who was dressed as Tiger Woods (a golfer). When I asked why he chose this costume he responded, "because Tiger's just such a cool guy;" later in the interview I asked if he had considered the history of black face and the racist connotations. He responded that he did but that he was not dressed as "a black man" but as "Tiger Woods." He went on to say that he thought of his costume as a kind of social experiment to see whether people saw race or Tiger Woods and that most people knew his intended mark immediately. Such instances as this illustrate the comodification of identities through the condensing of "self" to empty signs divorced of signifiers (Baudrillard, 2006). In other words, black face is not black face but one more step in personifying Tiger Woods who is himself an empty sign that can be identified by black face and dressing in Nike athletic wear. It is important to note that the young man made sure to get the brand of athletic wear correct as Nike, Tiger Woods' sponsors, for it would be a high crime to not invoke the right symbols (Baudrillard, 2002).

Stigmatized Identities and Bar Culture

Working in a bar is largely seen as a stigmatized occupation and barworkers, in various ways, both accept and resist imposition of stigmas. Religious groups who come out to North Gate occasionally to proselytize impose religious discourse as a part of constructing barwork as "sinful" while others impose negative capitalistic meanings on barworkers. As one two year manager at a bar on North Gate said:

> It's kind of like a car salesman… I mean people look down on car salesman because they think they… they're in the business to lie, steal and cheat basically—just to do whatever they can to sell the car. Uh, people look at the bar business kinda the same way; they, they think it,

> uh, it's sorta the bottom of the barrel so to speak, they, they kinda frown on people that own bars 'cause they see us as somebody who's out to get somebody drunk, you know, they look at us 'cause all the drunk drivers and stuff like that. They turn that around all to us. Nobody ever really looks at a bar as a good establishment, as a place where they want their daughters to go or something like that, you know, so it's, when you tell somebody you run a bar it it all depends on what kind of work they're in and their background; some people…some people, it doesn't bother 'em and some people they really look down on ya, really a lot, I mean they look down on ya big time.

Though barworkers develop many strategies for managing issues of stigmatization, there are still salient effects from stigmatization. Cooley's looking glass self tells us that we internalize the perceptions of others around us—in other words we come to see ourselves as other people see us. Having negative reflected self images requires some kind of response. Two of the major techniques used by barworkers to manage stigmas are by having exclusive social networks and developing virtual selves as "masks" to show others when interacting with patrons and others in reference to barwork.

Barworkers' social networks are exclusive in the sense that they tend to only consist of people involved in barwork or those who are part of barworkers' larger reference groups such as restaurant servers. As Mary said: "My life revolves around work; all my friends are from the bars and I work forty hours a week but then I go out drinking at the bars on Sunday, Monday and Wednesday nights, which are my days off and then after work I go to the bar party's that don't start until after 3." The culture surrounding barworkers' social network is Dionysian (Benedict, 1959). What is interesting about the simulacra cultures of bars is that all is illusion. On the surface, bars seem to be Dionysian; that is only the front stage of bars, however. The roles of swamper, door guy and bartender are all engaged in maintaining the order and rules of

the bar. They blend into the bar scene and are not noticed until they catch someone who is drinking underage or they break up a fight before it gets started. The bar is also very Apollonian. There is another backstage, however, which is the social networks of barworkers which actually is Dionysian. Barworkers, as Mary pointed out, will party after they get off work around 3 or 4 in the morning when they can meet at someone's apartment or house and do as they please as long as the police are not called.

Another aspect of the "barworker" identity is the significant symbols that surround and solidify the identity such as the bar key and the towel. The virtual selves of barworkers are solidified with these symbols and while one is an obvious tool of the trade, the bar key, the towel takes on a sacred significance. These symbols are what illustrate the Apollonian backstage of the bar with the corresponding sacred spaces of "employee only" and behind the bars. While the psuedo-Dionysian front stage is reified for the patrons through the ritual consumption of the totem alcohol leading to a collective effervescence leading to a solidifying of "bar culture." In this analysis of bar cultures and identities where is the irruption of the sacred or a hierophany where barworkers are seen as the high priests of the sacred alcohol. Supporting the reading of the symbol of towel as being sacred is that many of the barworkers will wear two towels one as a tool to wipe an one that stays clean and serves only as a symbol. The stigmatizing identity of barworker is akin to a totem that is on the one hand important to group solidarity while simultaneously being a role that is to be avoided and is relegated to those who are social outsiders to a degree (Durkheim, 1995; Eliade, 1987).

The virtual selves presented by barworkers can be seen as fluid and multifarious and though these labels are not comprehensive nor are they entire distinct from one another: Bad Ass, Comedian and Druggy. Each of the bars has their own simulacra identities that are expressed by the individual barworkers; as Mary said:

> The C. is nice and classy—not stuck up; the Gr. is in the process of improving not and it's improved quite a bit, it's a different atmosphere now; the Ch. is very traditional but they take it too far—people get spit on in there for so much as wearing a UT shirt; D. and F. are more traditional Texas bars and pull in the older crowd, there's not much there for younger people; I love Z., just the way it's set up, I love the little shot bar off the rest of it and the lights and I love karaoke, I don't know, it's just great; the V. has good drinks and then you'll never see boots in L.

She goes on to add:

> Oh, North Gate is awesome, it's like a mini sixth street, you know [strip of bars and restaurants in Austin]? It's a good atmosphere but, well, it is kind of cliquish. Like the L. and the V. are a clique and Ln. and the C. but they're more classy; like Ln. and the C. will share towels and limes back and forth if they run out but no one from there would go to the library to borrow stuff it doesn't happen and they wouldn't loan it anyway but the L. and the V. will loan stuff back and forth. And then some bars are clean and some are just coked-out.

These varying identities are both capitalist gimmicks at making money as well as ways of managing stigma. Whether these identities are "actually" performed or not is largely irrelevant when discussing virtual selves but there are instances when virtual self and actual self bleed into one another. Another aspect is age. Older barworkers tend not to fall into these virtual selves; as Joe, a bartender in his thirties said, "For me it's just a job, you know? I mean I make money I have fun then I go home to my family. I know some of the younger crowd goes out partying and hanging out until dawn but I can't do that shit anymore man. No, working at a bar is just a job just like any other, if I weren't

doing this I'd just be doing something else." The divide between the older and younger workers is underscored by Mary:

> They're a very diverse group; they're all over the place and we're all friends and go out drinking together… well, but there's a divide between age. The older crowd tends to hang out and then the younger crowd hangs out with each other, but then sometimes we all get together and go drinking. The younger ones are normally waitresses and stuff like that so there's a high turn-over rate because they have to work more hours and crappy hours but it goes by experience and so the bartenders tend to be older and get better hours and they stay longer.

These older workers have more of a focus on their families and are not as embedded in the barworker identity as the younger workers and thus do not feel as much pressure on their perceived identities from stigmas because the role of "family person" is more salient than "barworker."

In conclusion, barworkers are a diverse and dynamic group. They are embedded in varying levels of collective consciousnesses some of these levels create conflicts for barworkers while other mesh more easily. There is no single label or explanation that adequately covers this identity.

Questions Asked

General (and probably most benign):

1. Introduction—age, student status, how long the person had lived in Bryan/College Station, how long the person had worked in bars and their bar in particular, etcetera.

Specific:

2. Why did you decide to start working at bars?
3. What kind of person do you think it takes to do bar work?

4. What is your impression of North Gate in general?

This question as well as question 9 could be controversial questions depending on where the person decided to go with it. The geo-cultural area around Texas A&M is referred to as "aggieland" and could be described as obsessively conservative and traditional. Much of the conservatism and traditionalism gets reified through North Gate because the area is, socially, so central to Texas A&M that it often is thought of as a defining characteristic of the city where new students are socialized into the drinking culture as well as what it means to "be an aggie." Aggieland is a college town so, according to people I spoke with, the culture does tend to change over the years as new people come to the University and others graduate, transfer or just move away; however, the culture only changes in small ways such as the amount of partying at North Gate versus at others' houses because the broader culture of conservatism and traditionalism is fairly well insulated by the existence of an elaborate structure expressed through such things as "phish camp," "I-camp" and "T-camp"[12] which ensures the aggie enculturation of incoming students (freshman, international students and transfer students, respectively). Therefore, if a bar worker expresses disdain for the culture surrounding North Gate, he/she could face strong social reprimand from peers if the worker's opinions became public; for people to answer this question honestly, if they had a contrary opinion, would be to place a high degree of trust in my ethical handling of the information.

[12] All three camps, according to a former camp counselor, are designed to elicit positive affective states in regards to Texas A&M as well as fostering group cohesion among the participants and group loyalty to the University. The manifest content of these camps is a pedagogical tool geared toward imparting the traditions of Texas A&M.

5. Pretend you are talking with people who have never heard of the bar you work at, how would you describe it to them?
6. What kind of clients usually go to the bar you work at?
7. What kinds of people normally work at your bar?

The above three questions could be problematic for discussants for the obvious reason that they would not want express any negative feelings towards their place of employment for fear of economic retribution (for questions 4-8, my in-group affiliation could have been detrimental as interlocutors may not trust me not to discuss this with other bar workers).

8. What is your impression of other bars in North Gate; how would you describe them and the people who work at them, frequent them, etcetera and how do they compare with the bar you work at?

This question is the most potentially controversial. After I began this study bars on North Gate were charged with deciding based on race and nationality who is allowed into the bars. A fierce debate began that, at the moment I am writing this, is on going. Many expressed what I took to be suspicion, not verbally but bodily (they would pause, sit back or take a step back if we were standing, look at me intently and then speak slowly and precisely, choosing their words with caution) when I probed about the allegations. I came to learn through my experiences that bars on North Gate have a paradoxical relationship with one another (which I discuss in more detail later in the paper); on one hand, they are in economic competition with one another and many of the bars have a general feel of personal animosity toward one or a few of the other bars (this

animosity was described to me as "we just don't mesh" by more than one person but no one ever expressed, even when pressed, any concrete perceived wrong done by one bar to another) but on the other hand, North Gate would come together to challenge an outside threat to any of the bars. Dan, a bartender who occasionally managed at one of the bars, described the paradox this way: "We're like a family, you know? You might not like your brother so you pick on him but anyone else tries to do that and there's gonna be a fight; you might tell him afterward 'hey you were a real dick back there I'd've wanted to kick your ass too.' But you still protected him, right?" The caution with which I was regarded could have had a few sources; workers could have not wanted to say anything that could be taken as incriminating due to a feeling of loyalty to the North Gate community or to the bar they worked at in the fear allegations may be made there at a later time or, again, out of a fear of social or economic retribution aimed at the workers themselves.

9. How do you see Bryan/College Station and Texas A&M in general; what kind of person is attracted to an area like this?
10. How do you see yourself fitting in to all this? How large does the bar scene figure into your life; is it a living or a life style?

I drew up these questions under the notion that if I pointed in the direction I wanted to go (towards perceptions of identities revolving around North Gate) and then let people talk, I would be able to get at what I wanted. This method, however, turned out to be far too constricting and the conversations seemed much too artificial and forced for what I wanted to do. This was entirely my fault as when I began data gathering, I found myself

not venturing far beyond the questions I had written causing the conversation to be much too bounded. I felt since it constricted the "flow" of the discussion, I needed to alter my approach. Due to my desire to allow my interlocutors' identities to emerge through conversation I decided to simply talk with them and let interlocutors write the text of my research with me through their representations of their lived experiences. In practice, what I did is sit and talk with people about work, school and people they had come in contact with over the years.

CHAPTER IV

A REEL LIFE LESS ORDINARY

In continuing with the questions posed in the previous chapter of how barworkers construct identity in a postmodern culture, a look at cinematic depictions of barworkers is particularly important considering the breakdowns between "illusion" and "reality" discussed by scholars such as Baudrillard, Horkheimer, Adorno, Lyotard and Benjamin (to name just a few). As Horkheimer and Adorno (2002) pointed out in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the culture industry emerging in late capitalism is an atomizing endeavor. It reduces culture to its lowest common denominator in order to appeal to the broadest possible market. Moreover, the industry has detrimental effects on culture as a whole as it turns deep collective representations into formulaic, mass-produced spectacles. As a critical critique, Horkheimer and Adorno's approach highlights the reification of hidden capitalist ideologies through the production of culture. The salient implication for my discussion is the imposition of cultural identity on people through such social venues as movies. Specifically, I am interested in the projection of identity in terms of performativity of self (Butler, 2006) as well as the significant symbols that appear so fragmentary at this sensate cultural stage (Baudrillard, *passim*; Sorokin, 2006) as it pertains to the corner of the service industry known as barwork. In other words, the meanings attached to constructed identities are not unified and are constantly in flux. The fluidity of postmodern identities can be seen particularly well in cultural artifacts such as film.

In this work, I focus on culture and power as expressed through sexual and gendered identities as well as social character types. I do not analyze economic aspects implied in blue-collar jobs in the service industry, for, as social theorist, Michel Foucault argued, to focus on the economies and structures of societies is to miss the mechanics of power that operate, "psychiatric interment, the mental normalization of individuals, and penal institutions have no doubt a fairly limited importance if one is only looking for their economic significance" (Foucault, 2000, 117). Marxist analyses of class in film are manifold but, as Foucault points out, there is much more to power and the institutionalization of various kinds of power than can be discussed in focusing only on economic or class relationships. As such, I am here interested in the depictions of barworkers (and others in similar service industry occupations) not as laborers but as gendered and sexualized bodies.

The text I am analyzing is the representation of barworkers in films such as *Casablanca*, *Roadhouse*, *Coyote Ugly*, *Showgirls* and *Waiting*. As these texts have not been directly dealt with in scholarly works before, I will begin my analyses of these texts with the readings of barworkers themselves. In this way, I will decenter the assumed authority of academia and re-present voices of those whose identities are directly caught in these discourses.

Methodologically, I am weighing in on profound issues of epistemology and empiricism that have been a part of social science discourse dating back to Comte. Since the 1960's, the old vanguard of positivistic methodology has been under attack by those claiming a dissolution of past Marxian notions of subjectivities and identities (as

well as the assumptions of "objectivity" and the possibility of representing these subjectivities/identities). Popular culture and identity are parts of larger cultural texts that are in a constant state of "becoming" (in a Nietzschean sense). The question at hand of identities being played out in bars and the connection to movies regarding (re)presentations of salient reference groups for barworkers (*i.e.*: restaurant servers, barworkers and sex industry workers) touches upon epistemological issues dealing with dis-locations of discursive "fields." In other words, what are the texts and can they be separated one from another in non-arbitrary fashions in postmodern cultures (e.g. films about bars, servers and strippers from constructions of self for barworkers). According to Derrida (1997):

> [I]f reading must not be content with doubling the text, it cannot legitimately transgress the text toward something other than it, toward a referent (a reality that is metaphysical, historical, psychobiological, etc.) or toward a signified outside the text whose content could take place, could have taken place outside of language, that is to say, in the sense that we give here to that word, outside of writing in general. That is why the methodological considerations that we risk applying here to an example are closely dependent on general propositions… as regards the absence of the referent or the transcendental signified. *There is nothing outside of the text* [emphasis in original] (158).

From this, it cannot be determined who is the reader and who the read. In considering cultural (re)presentations of barworkers in film, the author is dead. As discussed in "Identity Construction in Bar Work," movies are highly influential to barworkers and their understandings of themselves is partly created through cinematic readings. It is with these methodological and epistemological issues in mind that I now refer to Donna Haraway's (1997) arguments that the boundaries between the discourses of social reality and science fiction are illusory (she refers to this in terms of the breakdown of

boundaries between literary worlds and "technoscientific" worlds—just think of the "cybernetic ears" people wear today called "blue-tooth headsets"); though she wishes to use this argument as a springboard for her replacement of the concept of identities with that of affinities, it also supports reading life as cinema and vice-versa (or in other words, "real-life" and "reel-life").

Furthermore, according to Gilles Deleuze (2003) in *Cinema 1*, movies, as with life, can be understood directly as sui generis things in and of themselves. Though I do not fully agree with this assessment (as I agree with Roland Barthes [1972] that there are always multifaceted analyses available to any given text) Deleuze's approach seems to be the one most taken by people watching movies uncritically (*i.e*. for enjoyment). This also highlights the insidiousness of the hidden ideologies of the culture industry from a reading out of the Frankfurt School as images as such shape social understandings without radical readings (in this way "radical readings" refers to any critical assessment of film beyond its manifest content).

At the heart of this analysis stands the old clichéd question, "does art imitate life or vice-versa?" The argument I am making here, however, goes beyond this question and argues, in the vein of Haraway, that such discursive boundaries are at best fluid, at worst, non-existent. The inception of the study came out of readings and representations of cinematic depictions of service workers. For instance, as is discussed in more detail in the chapter "Identity Construction in Bar Work," when the comedy *Waiting* (Rob McKittrick, 2005) was released, many barworkers began playing the "scrotum game." While this demonstrates a perceived affiliation among barworkers toward service

industry workers as a reference group in general, it also highlights the hyper-masculinized and homoerotic atmosphere of barwork that is captured in cinema. The scrotum game consists of one male worker trying to trick another into looking at his scrotum stretched into various positions (the names of which positions of reminiscent of the *Kama Sutra*). If the first worker is successful in making the second into a voyeur, then the first gets to kick the second a prescribed number of times on the rear.

The performance of hyper-masculinized traits, especially in so heterosexist an environment, loosely belies homoeroticism as the cultural latent content. As Judith Butler (1993) wrote:

> The hyperbolic conformity to the command can reveal the hyperbolic status of the norm itself, indeed, can become the cultural sign by which that cultural imperative might become legible. Insofar as heterosexual gender norms produce inapproximable ideals, heterosexuality can be said to operate through the regulated production of hyperbolic versions of "man" and "woman." These are for the most part compulsory performances, ones which none of us choose, but which each of us is forced to negotiate. I write "forced to negotiate" because the compulsory character of these norms does not always make them efficacious. Such norms are continually haunted by their own inefficacy; hence, the anxiously repeated effort to install and augment their jurisdiction (237).

Butler is arguing that gender and sexuality exist as broader cultural patterns replicated across generations (though certainly, I would add, changing across time) and these arbitrarily dichotomous bodily inscriptions appeal to idealized and absolutists performances of gender and sexuality. Though the ideals of heterosexism are unattainable (as are most ideals), there is a further issue at hand—despite Butler's denial of the possibility of loci of selfhood or identity (as both are overdetermined and in constant states of flux)—the parasitic nature of socially dominant identity clusters. As

Michel Serres (2007) wrote, "The theory of being, ontology, brings us to atoms. The theory of relations brings us to the parasite" (xi). Dominant/subordinate social group relations depend upon maintaining strict boundaries between dichotomous categories (*i.e.*: men/women, white/black, straight/gay) where the disenfranchised (immoral) group is constructed to give meaning to the existence of the dominant (moral) group's phenomenological sense of self. Thus the categories must remain distinct and rigid and any outlying data must be discarded (*i.e.*: hermaphrodites and other intersexed or transgendered peoples, the host of Asian, European, African, South American, Indigenous ethnicities, the wide variety of sexualities that do not constitute either straight or gay, bisexual, asexual, transsexual, pansexual, bestiality, etc.). Thus heterosexuality exists through a parasitic relationship to homosexuality (as whites to blacks and men to women) (Butler, 2006). The underlying homoeroticism of the bar scene (as discussed in detail in the previous chapter) in both "real life" and "reel life" is a reification of heterosexual masculine ideals while latent (and various) other sexualities are present. To highlight—there is little difference between "fiction" and "reality" at this cultural moment. Thus, the new recruit to the *Waiting* crew is not allowed to speak throughout the entire movie until the end where he becomes fully inducted into the group by tricking the entire crew into looking at his scrotum and the new recruit in a bar has not assimilated until he has done the same.

At this point in the discussion Jean Baudrillard (1990) helps in that cinema bypasses processes of cultural frameworking by divorcing sign and signifier and *seducing* the consumer with recycled and "individuated" images. Baudrillard (2004)

argues that the shift from a production-based economy to a consumption-based economy leads to a hegemonic postcolonial culture where other social life-forms are destroyed to make way for the tautological consumer. Baudrillard shifts the focus from Durkheim's concept of the cult of the individual under an anomic organic society to "the cult of the wholly other"[13] (Harden and Carley, 2009, 31-2) under the auspices of an overarching code that deconstructs boundaries of class, race, gender and sexuality (each of which in turn become signs in service to the code) though Baudrillard does not directly discuss these ascribed characteristics in terms of the code (excepting class), he does argue that the code has a broad "leveling effect" in terms of each person in consumer society operating "equally" under the code. In the race to move products being produced by Occidental companies exploiting the labor of "third world countries" (the globalized proletariat) signs come to "signify" mass produced individuality where each consumer "buys" into the ideology of penultimate difference. At this point the cult of the wholly other emerges as an attempt to become truly different (the unnameable) or simulacra gods (or prosthetic gods to borrow from Freud). This difference, however, is a mere chimera as each "individual" is as such for the sake of the code (why the difference is never ultimately so—this is my addition as Baudrillard claims the breakdown of the dialectic). This shift can be illustrated in cinematic images through the presentation of character types through history (Riesman, 2001). Early film depiction of barworkers were lone male "tough guys" with their own moral code (such as films from the 1920's-

[13] The term is my coinage but the concept comes directly from Baudrillard's analysis of the desire to be "different" and the equivalent desire to be "unknowable" and thus, wholly other discussed in his work, *The Consumer Society*. This is also connected with Sartre's assertion that each of us has a "God Complex." Baudrillard links this desire to be "fully different" with a desire for the extinction of self (see his analysis of joggers in *America*). Also connected is the Freudian concept of thanatos or the "death drive."

50's of Westerns with saloon scenes, mobster movies based on 1920's and 30's Chicago produced during the time) while later depictions show wild partiers surrounded by people with little or no concerns (such as the movies discussed here). This illustrates the shift from inner-direction (production-based economies) to other-direction (consumption-based economies). As David Riesman (2001) demonstrates in *The Lonely Crowd*, this shift also constitutes a shift in depth and relations; it represents a breakdown in once clear social boundaries and the other-directed type being at home both everywhere and nowhere (such as Naomi in *Showgirls* and Jersey in *Coyote Ugly*—discussed below).

Casablanca (Michael Curtiz, 1942) illustrates the closing of an era. As such it contains several cultural paradoxes due to its position between modern and postmodern historical epochs. As many postmodernist (c.f., Zygmut Bauman) have argued the holocaust and World War II in general represent the beginning of the end of modernism (the fall of Communism being the final death nail). Nazism, in this sense, represents the Enlightenment Project taken to its logical extreme: rationalized, reductionistic methods of identifying "undesirables" and then "removing" them from society all in the service of bringing about world-wide utopia…. The 1950's saw the rise of consumeristic culture and the US as a world superpower (Lears, 1994). As modernism is associated with inner-directed social character types, postmodernism is associated with other-directed character types. "Beautifying had evolved [by the early 1940's] from an everyday grooming habit into an assertion of American national identity" (Peiss, 1988, 245).

Riesman (2001), being central to my analysis of *Casablanca*, must be briefly elucidated before going much further. He argues there have been several fundamental shifts in culture which he characterizes with three ideal types that correspond with three different socio-cultural types which existed and exist in distinct spacio-temporal periods: tradition-directed, inner-directed and other-directed. A person who was tradition-directed "tends to reflect his membership in a particular age-grade, clan or caste; he learns to understand and appreciate patterns which have endured for centuries, and are modified but slightly as the generations succeed each other. The important relationships of life may be controlled by careful and rigid etiquette…" (Riesman, 2001, 11). Rick (Humphrey Bogart) was clearly an inner-directed type as demonstrated by his moral disdain for Nazism and (the main point) his subsequent actions against them. Inner-directed types emerge in a culture that provides a higher level of stability for those operating within it. The inner-directed types reify society by looking inwardly "in the sense that [this inward direction] is implanted early in life by the elders and directed toward generalized but nonetheless inescapably destined goals" (*ibid*., 15). Riesman is then able to extend the analysis into the next shift. The last shift being the narcissistic, child-like other-directed types. An other-directed type is "shallower, freer with his money, friendlier, more uncertain of himself and his values, more demanding of approval…" (*ibid*., 19). Ugarte (Peter Lorre) characterizes other-directedness most clearly: he is concerned about whether Rick likes him; he expresses disdain for the war but this is an example of fake sincerity as he also sells illegal letters of transit to refugees at a high price.

Rick is the quintessential loner tough guy who "goes it alone." But he has fallen from grace in that he serves Nazis and Resistance Fighters all the same and asserts at several points in the movie that "I don't stick my neck out for anybody." His nihilistic attitude toward life (which came out of a failed love affair as we learn toward the middle of the movie) illustrates his "malfunctioning" internalized moral gyroscope. As a morality tale, Rick must give up the woman who he loves in an act of redemption (giving up his seat on the plane to the US to his love interest's husband) in order to rectify the amoralistic stance he takes throughout the movie. *Casablanca* provides historical context for the shift between modern and postmodern representations of barworkers in cinema (in the juxtaposition of the inner-directed Rick and the other-directed Ugarte) and serves as a launching platform to discuss the deconstruction of the boundary between "reality" and "illusion."

Casablanca, being a transitional classic, has also become a simulacrum (copy of a copy without an original) in popular culture. This is demonstrated by two main examples: the recycling of the movie into other cultural venues and the addition of lines into the movie that were never originally there (such as "play it again, Sam"). Postmodern (and post-Marxist) scholars (c.f.: Marcuse, Bauman, Lyotard, Derrida, Baudrillard, Deleuze, etc.) have argued that a recycling of culture and a loss of originality mark our current historical epoch. Casablanca has also fallen victim to this trend as movies such as Woody Allen's Play It Again, Sam (1972), Cabo Blanco (1981), Barb Wire (1996) (with Pamela Anderson) and Carrotblanca (1995) (A Looney Tune's production) (found at: http://www.filmsite.org/casa.html).

This list is not exhaustive and there exist many more spoofs and (re)presentations of Casablanca have spewed from the culture industry since 1942. In terms of collective (re)presentations of the movie in popular culture, we can argue that Casablanca no longer exists. As Jean Baudrillard (*America*, 1999; *The Perfect Crime*, 2002) described present society, it is the time after the perfect crime or the murder of "reality." He claimed we now live in an endless circulation of fictions where we cannot tell the difference between illusion and "reality;" seeing the Great Pyramid of Las Vegas is no different to us than going to Giza (excepting, of course, that Las Vegas has the Eiffel Tower as well). Since we are narcissistic while simultaneously "uncertain of ourselves" (*i.e.*: other-directed) we can pick up any cultural artifact, a simulacra representation for example, and when we tire of that "fiction" move on to create another without any concern for continuity or history (this is one of the reasons why Butler argues that there is no self). Another aspect of this "death of reality" as it pertains to *Casablanca* is the line, "play it again, Sam," which nowhere appears in the movie. The closest line to it is when Rick drunkenly yells at Sam, "Play the damn song Sam, if she can take it, so can I." The line "play it again, Sam" did not appear until four years after *Casablanca* in 1946 in the Marx brothers' *A Night in Casablanca*" (found at: http://www.filmsite.org/casa.html). The line almost goes beyond the theoretical bounds of "simulacra" as it constitutes a copy without an original being interjected into an original within collective memory. This is the crux of the issue, it does not matter that we can go and watch *Casablanca*, the movie exists outside of itself as a cultural artifact

in the West's collective memory and the line, "play it again, Sam" is thus an indelible part of the movie.

The culture industry not only co-opts classical forms but also cultural movements. Gendered and sexual identities (particularly in terms of second and third wave feminism) also become signs divorced of signification and packaged for mass consumption. The culture industry operates as an expression of power, turning all subversive, "homegrown" venues of culture into reflections of itself (furthering my "parasitic" critique of dominant/subordinate texts). This power relationship, while normally operating to increase solidarity within a society, increases anomie as the insidious form of the collective consciousness constitutes individuals while those individuals reify and construct its power base by perpetuating and consuming it (much like a snake eating its own tail).

While overall this study is dealing with the depiction of barworkers in cinema, a movie such as *Showgirls* (Paul Verhoeven, 1995), like *Waiting*, further illustrates broader constructions of service workers in lower status sectors of the industry (*i.e.*: barworkers, strippers, waiters/waitresses, etc.). This is also relevant to the overall project at hand because, as I have observed in the process of conducting an ethnography, many barworkers associate, party and identify with sex industry workers (this is particularly so considering the "tainted" moral association made by others as was discussed by the bar manager interviewed in the previous chapter). The movie revolves around a young woman, Nomi Malone, played by Elizabeth Berkley, who hitchhikes to Las Vegas in the hopes of becoming a showgirl. The movie sets up an intersection along

axes of domination where gender, sexuality and class collide within the world of Las Vegas dancers, exotic and otherwise, to create a social milieu from which the "liberated" Nomi emerges at the end of the movie leaving behind possible "fame and fortune" to go back to traveling across America. *Showgirls* is a particularly violent (symbolically) film as it, on the surface, appears to embrace feminist ideologies while incorporating those ideologies into the patriarchy.

Issues of identity (as a phenomenological sense of selfhood) serve as the "bookends" of the movie. When Nomi enters the screen, we know nothing about her and she is seemingly birthed from the vast expanse of desert with nothing but a travel bag (in this case a placental identity following from the desert as amniotic fluid—the desert in this sense becomes wet with potential embodied in the figure of Nomi—but it is a birth ex nihilo). The male midwife who helped bring Nomi out of the desert (the driver who picked her up) steals her nascent self. The feminine self in this sense is denied existence at the moment of birth through the violence of the phallic (the act of stealing her "stuff" being a rape of the symbolic), representing the trauma of feminine birth into the patriarchal social realm that disorients Nomi who finds herself alone until another young woman offers her a place to stay. The figure of Nomi recreates here the infant traumatized by birth and latching on to the libidinal object as mother to satisfy her craving for an identity—this act of displacement (object of satiation symbolically standing in, in a reductionistic way, for the "actual" mother—the desert) is also what catapults Nomi into the world of showgirls as her feminine "guide" in this postmodern heroine epic works for "the show" (Butler, 2006; Baudrillard, 1999).

The text offers readers a hero's tale in form only (there is the naïve, young hero who suffers early injustice, a kind teacher who takes the hero in, the various quests and villains to be slaughtered, an estrangement with the teacher after a moral breech by the hero, followed by reconciliation through a particularly masculinist notion of revenge…[Campbell, 1972]); the content, however, is of the fragmentary and paradoxical duality of matricide and a longing to reclaim the now empty space of the womb (to achieve, as it were, *unio mystio* with The Mother).

The movie begins couched as a third wave feminist's *apology de spectaculis* (in the sense of the story being about a young woman becoming empowered through embracing her sexuality in the form of stripping on stage) located around discourses of power in owning feminine sexuality and the display of such power within the ideology of consumerist America; Nomi, however, finds herself acting out selfhood as reflective negation[14], perennially re-focusing identity back onto the men involved in the show. Many third wave feminists discuss issues of sexuality in terms of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis and while in the previous chapter, I discuss female barworkers' identity being constructed through sexuality in terms of spectacle, a deeper analysis can be made looking at these issues as they play out in film.

The trauma of ripping away her materialist sense of self (her bag) leads her to accept wholly masculinist definitions of feminine self where Nomi comes to desire a false phallus (or in terms of patriarchal academic ideologies embedded in psychoanalysis: penis envy). The image of Nomi's bag as identity is associated with

[14] My term

feminine energy while the phallus, symbolized by her switch-blade knife, represents patriarchal phallic imagery with its associated action of penetration. Considering the feminist promise at the beginning of the movie, the subversion of imagery is an act of matricide that occurs toward the middle of the film (disassociating from The Mother to join the show) encompassed in the act of owning male-dominated images of femininity. The scene where Nomi has sex with the stage manager of the show takes place in a pool and is juxtaposed with the otherwise (or surface reading) dry imagery of the desert. The sex, in this context however, is the acceptance by Nomi of her role as woman in a male world and as such is dry; an anomic grasping for a self by a dehydrated woman dried in the gaudy brightness of a Las Vegas cock.

In Nomi's identity politics, the image of her knife is both her bane and salvation once she has figured out how to co-opt this patriarchal symbol. In the beginning, she holds the knife haphazardly with a false air of confidence—it is her awkwardness with the phallus of the patriarchy. In the middle of the movie she seeks out a masculinist form of revenge for the rape of her teacher—the knife at this point represents her acceptance of the male gaze as she has internalized this otherwise external identity and reflects back through her adept handling of the knife. She threatens the rapist with it after allowing him to suckle at her nipples as a subversion of the libidinous object (her nipples). Her teacher served as an image of surrogate mother for Nomi at the beginning of the movie, feeding her and caring for her—Nomi adoption of the role of mother (in suckling the rapist) recreates the role as the sarcastic/ironic mother in that the suckling is only a pretense for the embracing of the masculine identity (she afterwards beats the

rapist with her knife). At the end Nomi is again hitchhiking and is again picked up by the midwife (the other bookend); after asking the same question as he did at the beginning only in past tense ("did you gamble; did you win?" instead of "coming to gamble; gotta gamble to win?") Nomi answers, "Yes, I won myself." At which point she pulls out her knife, the midwife having just realized who Nomi was instantly capitulates at her demand for her "stuff" back. It is this subversion of the phallus by which we recognize a return to the feminine as rebellion against the status quo. Nomi demands her self back from man at the point of his own image and then uses his vehicle to climb back into the womb of the primal mother. The connection between these readings of gender and sexuality and barworkers is the extant conditions necessitating strategies of reclamations of self by female barworkers operating in patriarchal environments (such as wearing an engagement ring even though not engaged or embracing sexuality as spectacle and wearing revealing clothes in order to get larger tips- see previous chapter).

Showgirls, despite its intended reading made painfully obvious by the end of the movie, reifies masculinist identities clothed in feminist accessories. The tell-tale sign being desert as central text. The culture industry is a masculinist endeavor and though counter narratives exist (such as feminist readings of film) they become assimilated into the "circulation of fictions" and are (re)presented in a hollow and superficial form:

> I speak of the American deserts and of the cities which are not cities. No oases, no monuments; infinite panning shots over mineral landscapes and freeways. Everywhere: Los Angeles of Twenty-Nine Palms, Las Vegas or Borrego Springs… No desire: the desert. Desire is still something deeply natural, we live off its vestiges in Europe, and off the vestiges of a moribund critical culture. Here the cities are mobile deserts. No

> monuments and no history: the exaltation of mobile deserts and simulation. There is the same wilderness in the endless, indifferent cities as in the intact silence of the Badlands. Why is LA, why are the deserts so fascinating? It is because you are delivered from all depth there—a brilliant, mobile, superficial neutrality, a challenge to meaning and profundity, a challenge to nature and culture, an outer hyperspace, with no origin, no reference points. No charm, no seduction in all this. Seduction is elsewhere… (Baudrillard, 1999, 123-4).

Thus, *Showgirls* makes feminine identity politics into a farce. From the outset, the birth ex nihilo is all the feminine identity is to be: a state of profound nothingness within its lack of meaning and profundity. Nomi, in this sense, is neither tragic, nor a heroine, but a fool dancing in the King's court (read: not Queen's). *Showgirls*, as text, fits squarely within the patriarchal ideologies of the culture industry and re-creates the status quo embedded within a simulacra challenge. The only desire generated by Nomi then is the adolescent attempt at seduction with fumbling fingers trying to convince readers that she truly is the hero of the tale and we are watching a drama.

A particularly poignant example of the deconstruction of the boundaries between "real life" and "reel life" is found in barworkers' adoption of *Road House* (Rowdy Harrington, 1989) as an idealized version of what it means to be a barworker. Though one older barworker (he had been working in the bars for over a decade) told me that many of the men who applied to work in the bars watched *Road House* and thought it would be fun (he added those men rarely stay with barwork), *Road House* is often quoted in the bars not as a joke but as rules of behavior (particularly the lead character, James Duncan's, played by Patrick Swayze, three rules: "Never underestimate your opponent; expect the unexpected;" "Never start something in the bar unless absolutely necessary—take it outside;" and "Above all, be nice").

Much like *Waiting*, *Road House* attempts to construct hyper-masculinized identities through violent homoeroticism. Patrick Swayze, in an interview included on the deluxe edition DVD of *Road House*, said (I paraphrase), "It was the 1980's and we were trying to define what it meant to be men." This blurring of gender and sexuality demonstrates the "flawed logic" of heterosexism; or as Butler (1993) put it:

> In psychoanalytic terms, the relation between gender and sexuality is in part negotiated through the question of the relationship between identification and desire. And here it becomes clear why refusing to draw lines of causal implication between these two domains is as important as keeping open an investigation of their complex interimplication. For, if to identify as a woman is not necessarily to desire a man, and if to desire a woman does not necessarily signal the constituting presence of a masculine identification, whatever that is, then the heterosexual matrix proves to be an *imaginary* logic that insistently issues forth its own unmanageability. The heterosexual logic that requires that identification and desire be mutually exclusive is one of the most reductive of heterosexism's psychological instruments: if one identifies *as* a given gender, one must desire a different gender (239).

But with all such reductionistic and rationalistic (flip side of the Enlightenment coin) systems, the boundaries against which the systems draws its identification is porous. Throughout the movie, Duncan illustrates his asceticism by reading instead of partying, refusing to drink anything but coffee while at work and turning down offers of sex (including pulling naked women out of the bar). Moreover, when he does have sex with a woman it is anomic and violent and both wear their clothes throughout the scene. The sex scene in the movie is juxtaposed against the final fight between Duncan and Jimmy (Duncan's mirror partner as illustrated by the names James Duncan and Jimmy).

The fight sequence has Duncan half-naked with Jimmy wearing a ripped muscle shirt and skintight jeans. The choreography resembles the violent sex scene and looks

like a hyper-masculinized ballet (maybe a throwback to *Dirty Dancing*?). At one point, Jimmy holds Duncan, head pulled back onto his shoulder with Jimmy's body cradling Duncan's and says intimately into Duncan's ear, "I used to fuck guys like you in prison." The end of the sequence has Jimmy pull out a gun (the old standby phallus) and say, "I guess I'll have to do you the old fashion way;" his gun ejaculates as Duncan kicks it away and then consummates the exchange by ripping out Jimmy's throat with his bare hands (with the requisite spurt of blood). In this way, the fight scene becomes more sexual than the sex scene. The very act of ripping out a throat with bare-hands (Duncan's preferred method of killing other men) is wet and organic, a swapping of life fluids, a penetration of flesh with flesh. The fight scene, unlike the sex scene, is anything but anomic—it is intimate and sensual.

Road House also touches on another (besides heterosexism) trend in American culture that has spread to every corner of the service industry (as well as American culture in general); the last of Duncan's three rules encapsulates this trend best: "Above all else, be nice." We Americans love friendly, shallow, other-directed people circulating through one simulacra identity after another especially in a service industry outlet (is there anything in America left that still produces something material?) where people are friendly and tell us "have a nice day," just as they said to the last person and the one before that. The appearance of emotions (fake sincerity in Riesman's terms) has become an artificial symbol to be exchanged as an illusory commodity. Duncan teaches the other barworkers to sell themselves as part of the bar experience; it no longer suffices to simply do a job well; it does not count unless it is done with a smile.

Baudrillard, in *America* (1999), links the discussion between inner/other-directedness, collective representations and the empty signs of emotions in one fell swoop:

> It [the American smile] is part of the general cryogenization of emotions. It is, indeed, the smile the dead man will wear in his funeral home…. The smile of immunity, the smile of advertising: 'This country is good. I am good. We are the best'. It is also Reagan's smile—the culmination of the self-satisfaction of the entire American nation—which is on the way to becoming the sole principle of government. An autoprophetic smile, like all signs in advertising. Smile and others will smile back. Smile to show how transparent, how candid you are. Smile if you have nothing to say. Most of all, do not hide the fact you have nothing to say nor your total indifference to others. Let this emptiness, this profound indifference shine out spontaneously in your smile. *Give* your emptiness and indifference to others, light up your face with the zero degree of joy and pleasure, smile, smile, smile… Americans may have no identity, but they do have wonderful teeth [italics in original] (34).

Duncan's sex scene illustrates this lack of authenticity as do the bar scenes where Duncan removes violent customers with a smile (not of pleasure in his job but of desperate emptiness). We reward people greatly for this lack of authenticity and thus reify the postmodern collective's power. In the service industry, as just one example, people tip servers who constantly smile, who are nice. How many times have you heard people say something negative about another person and then add "but he/she *is* nice," as though this niceness were all that truly mattered anyway. As Baudrillard points out, our present cultural stance is artificial and we now have been (re)created in the image of this idol of apathy.

The last movie of this analysis of the depiction of barworkers in cinema also highlights the consumption of other-directed empty emotions but does so in terms of the construction of fragmented, yet individuated, subjectivities (also in terms of gender and

sexuality) through the power of totalized institutions. *Coyote Ugly* (David McNally, 2000) follows Violet Sanford (played by Piper Perabo) as she tries to become a songwriter in New York City but has to take a job at a local bar called Coyote Ugly in order to financially survive. The movie shows how women (who get the heaviest dose of socialization under a patriarchal society dues to their perceived "need" to be under stricter control) can be used to perpetuate misogynistic collective forms against themselves and other women.

Goffman's concept of total institutions refers to those social systems defined by their complete power to define and construct individuals within them. Violet's transformation from a shy, musically talented young woman to a leather-clad, liquor-slinging, bar-dancing exhibitionist demonstrates her induction into the total institution of Coyote Ugly because the bar, as institution, constructs her self far beyond her role of "barworker" (her clothing, demeanor, manner of speech and even name change due to her life as a barworker). In this system, the bar's female owner acts as a sovereign maintaining "correct" behavior of the workers going so far as to change Violet's wardrobe to something "more fitting for a Coyote" and changing her name to "Jersey."

In *Discipline and Punish* (1995), Foucault talks about sovereigns from the example of a monarch. A king monopolizes power and transmits it to others only so that his presence is extended beyond his corporal existence. The monopoly and subsequent surplus of power displayed by the king has the ultimate effect of showing the powerlessness of the ruled (29). Foucault labels any authority figure with such a surplus of power where the subject is forced to acknowledge his/her relative powerlessness

"sovereign." Toward the end of the movie, Violet tries to leave work early to make a music audition (the bar owner had previously agreed to let her go early) but, in a demonstration of her power (within the context of the institution) changes her mind setting off a series of events that leads to Violet getting fired anyway. Scenes such as this as well as moments where the bar owner, in a pragmatic attempt to make more money, asks her workers to strip in order for her to make more money, demonstrate the bar owner's assimilation into masculine modes of constructing feminine sexuality. In this way, the female bar owner plays facilitator to the male gaze.

Foucault argues these "webs of power" are employed through many artifices by sovereigns for the sake of maintaining the imbalance of power between ruler and ruled. These artifices are highly effective due to their tendency to normalize, individualize and divide the subject through increasingly rational and objective stances outside as well as within the focus of domination. In a word, power in contemporary societies is maintained to a great extent through *precision* (though there are, of course, many more such maintenance techniques). Violet must learn the precise way to spin a bottle of liquor to pour a shot and the precise way to dress as a Coyote. These are methods of training meant to strip away personal identities to be replaced with personalized and institutionally (particularly the bar but also larger institution of enforcing gender normativity) sanctioned identities; thus, Violet, the shy songwriter, becomes Jersey, a virginal nunnery escapee looking to have her first experience with sex.

Every night, the Coyote Ugly is packed with customers, mostly male though also female, who come to drink and watch the coyotes dance. All eyes are on them and they

are also under the watchful eye of the female bar owner. This situation constitutes another major aspect of total institutions: Panopticism. A panopticon is a watchtower built in the center of a circular prison where all the inmates can be observed by guards without the inmates knowing when they are observed. This act of observation is the "gaze" where inmates feel themselves to be watched at all times since they cannot know when they are being watched. The prisoners thus internalize the gaze by self-correcting their behavior to conform to the prescribed discipline of the prison regardless of what that discipline is. As Foucault wrote, "[a] real subjection is born mechanically from a fictitious relation. So it is not necessary to use force to constrain the convict to good behavior, the madman to calm, the worker to work, the schoolboy to application, the patient to the observation of the regulations" (*Ibid*., 202). Though I disagree with Foucault that force is no longer a salient means of control, it is no longer the default method in most contemporary institutions. The internalization of this subjugation by an alien power creates a "soul" (thus "Jersey" becomes Violet's soul), according to Foucault, which is born from the paradoxical activity of normalizing bodies in space and time. In other words, the panopticon creates individuals by forcing people into normalized routes of behavior.

Another important point, *Coyote Ugly*, like *Showgirls*, couches its reification of the patriarchy within a kind of ersatz feminism. There is a running joke through the movie of women beating up men who treat them as nothing more than sexual objects; however, the construction of their selves through the male gaze is much more detrimental to any perceived holistic identity than being touched inappropriately. In a

merely surface reading of the film, feminism becomes the apparent "antithesis" to the patriarchy leading one to conclude, in this instance, that the culture industry takes on the role of the synthesis producing these movies as a new thesis. Horkheimer and Adorno's insistence of a materialist concept of history in terms of Marxian dialectics, however, is overly simplistic in this context. It also becomes a false dialectic as the postmodern collective (read: the code) holds all the power and ability to construct collective representations (one of which being the patriarchy), thus feminism becomes the butt of a joke made by the culture industry.

In conclusion, the boundaries between the texts "reel life" and "real life" are particularly porous. The question of whether art imitates life or life art is moot at this point as the degree of intertextuality demonstrates there is little difference between the two stances. The systems of power organize and define culture artifacts in particular and collective representations in general. Though we are actively engaged in reifying these systems of power they simultaneously exist outside us and "overdetermine" (in terms of Foucault's webs of power) our fragmented senses of self. The particular venue I have analyzed here being the (re)presentation of barworkers in cinema serves as an example of the construction of identities through sexuality and gender imposed upon those performing those identities in their lived experiences.

CHAPTER V

THE MEDIUM IS THE BAR EXPERIENCE:

PLAYING WITH THE "WILL TO TRUTH"

Proposition[15]

In any given informal social space, in Western culture, where people and actant technology[16] are present, interaction with actant technology will take precedence over authentic interaction with others. In other words, in an informal social space, where actant technology and other people are present, people will interact more with the technology than with other people.

Rationale/Literature Review/Definitions

One of the major criticisms of postmodern theories is that they cannot be shown to have much or any bearing on social realities particularly considering the "difficulties" involved in formalizing or operationalizing postmodern concepts. In other words, postmodern thinking, coming out of humanities and the more recently "developed" field of cultural studies,[17] cannot be tested or falsified due to the seemingly irreconcilable stance many leading postmodernists take against logic, rationality and science as viable epistemologies. As such, any attempt to encase postmodern concepts within a scientifically testable formal theory seems, at best, counter-intuitive, at worst, a gross violation of one of the exceedingly few overarching postmodern "tenets" (for lack of a

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[15] I would like to thank Bianca Manago and Tony Love for their assistance on this study.

[16] Developed from Bruno Latour, explained in detail below

[17] "Developed" is radicalized here because cultural studies is arguably more of an amalgamation or pastiche of several other fields thrown together with little, if any, consensus as a definable field of study, which happens to be another major criticism of postmodernity as a school of thought that, while a "true" criticism, is a purposeful part of postmodern "methodology."

better word): The general aversion, and in some cases outright rejection, to and of rationalized, codified formulations of knowledge (Baudrillard, 2006b; 2002; Foucault, 1994; Rosenau, 1992; Clarke, 2005; Deleuze and Guattari, 2005). This being said, however, another of the overarching tenets of postmodernity (never mind the extreme irony of talking about "postmodern tenets") is a deconstruction of authority and legitimation and a persistent rejection of scientific methodologies in giving expression to postmodern concepts is to give science a place of high importance (in its methodological negation) in postmodernism. Furthermore, to refuse the "validity" of scientific epistemologies is to violate the inherent relativism of postmodern approaches to varying "realities." Keeping these criticisms and arguments in mind, in this chapter, I attempt to carry out a study in the positivist tradition by formalizing key postmodern concepts and then applying the formalizations (as the concepts themselves are lost in the violence of formalization) to data gathered during observations of patrons in a bar on Northgate. There are several aspects to this study that need to be laid out up front. Firstly, postmodern culture is a condition in which pat definitions cannot "work" (it can be said that "postmodernism is defined as that which, by definition, defies definition") in the sense of using them to "discovering" truth. In this sense, positivistic approaches to postmodern cultures are inherently inadequate for expressing those cultures. Secondly, in keeping with the overall relativistic, Nietzschean approach to methodology being developed in this project, so do all other approaches to postmodern cultures is they begin with the objective of "discovering truth out there in the world." The problem is not necessarily the approaches themselves but the epistemological assumptions at the

beginning of applying the approach. Thirdly, though I am applying formal theory and a statistical approach as a critique of positivism in the chapter, it does not imply that the meaning constructed using the approach does not exist. In all the approaches in this project, from ethnography to historical comparison, from content analysis to textual analysis, the meaning generated among people and social and cultural texts are illusory (in a Nietzschean sense) but that does not mean they are meaningless. So to with the chapter at hand, the intersection of social action, the location and focus of the social observer, the construction of operationalized concepts, the positivistic methodological tradition, postmodern/structural schools of thought, the presence of technology in bars and much more becomes the site of meaning generation. The "results section" of this chapter tells readers "something" about this intersection though not (as some proponents of positivistic and formal approaches might claim) something about social interaction in a particular bar on Northgate in relation to the presence of technology independently of all the other strains going into making this particular intersection.

As can be seen below, in my definitions, my question regarding technology and authentic human interaction is not new and is a question that has been taken up by many scholars—particularly those of a postmodern or existential persuasion. Beyond being a new approach to this question in terms of using formal theory, however, my formulation can also be differentiated from other formulations in that it combines so many different postmodern and existential perspectives on the relationship between technology and human interactions. As I argue in my chapter, "Shifting/Shattering Epistemes," thinkers as varied as Donna Haraway (1997) and Timothy Leary (1997) have argued that the

combination of the organic and technological is not only occurring all around us but that it is also a beneficial and desirable thing. They have argued that humans are brought to a new level of interaction through technological media in the sense of opening up discursive boundaries that are unique and independent of oppressive narratives (such as, according to Haraway, technoscience and the military-industrial complex) and by adding a reflexivity to the question of what it means to be human that would be otherwise impossible (as Leary argues). Neither of these authors, however, seems to seriously entertain the possibility of technology limiting and in many regards controlling humans in relation to one another as well as themselves. The old Marxian problematic of the reversal of the subject/object divide in terms of the "technoscientific" is nullified in their theoretical musings.

Jean Baudrillard, however, paints a nihilistic view of technology that, while I largely agree with his perspective, seems overly tautological and devoid of specificity or alternate possibilities. George Ritzer discusses technology that is both controlled by humans and technology that controls humans but I think his definition is too broad to distinguish between different types of control over humans (he, in painting nonhuman technology with a broad brush, includes everything from headsets to bureaucracies in his category of nonhuman technology); while I agree with Ritzer's formulation, I must add that some technologies constrict, alter and control human experiences in very different ways from something like a bureaucracy. For instance, bureaucracy does not necessarily set up conditions of hyperreality in the same way as technologies such as video games or Ipods do in terms of creating conditions from which lived experience can be

encapsulated nearly fully within the medium (particularly in hyperreal existences such as *Second Life*). Bureaucracies do almost fully encapsulate people's lives and are actively involved in constructing, in alienating ways, people's lived experiences (one need only think of Weber's "Iron Cage"). But this is a form of hyperreal social construction through supra-rationalized systems not through a simulacra object (such as a computer or video game console) that, after being created by human hands, allows access to projected hyperreal universes where people can only interact with one another through the venues provided by the medium (whereas in bureaucracy one could, conceivably, speak with someone else in the bureaucracy in a way outside of the routinized venues provided by the system). While I include bureaucracy as a measure in my study (in keeping with Ritzer's notion of bureaucracies as nonhuman technologies) and include patrons interacting with barworkers at work as a form of technological interaction, I think it important to differentiate bureaucracy from simulacra technologies. My formulation, while being grounded in the above-mentioned texts, adds a different perspective to the discussions by taking into consideration the "agency" of technology in human interactions. Moreover, while the question of authenticity is implied in these other formulations, and in some of them Heidegger seems to be assumed, a clear grounding of authenticity within human-to-human interactions has been lacking. My formulation sets up authenticity as dependent on human interaction and as mutually exclusive to interactions with "actant[18] technology." The question then comes not as whether there can be authentic interactions between humans and machines but in which

[18] Coming from Bruno Latour

kind of interaction humans are more likely to engage given the presence of both technology and other people. Previously, dealings with this issue have not really asked this question so much as simply asserted varying answers (Haraway, 1997; Baudrillard, 2006b).

The following three definitions (actant technology, authentic interaction and informal social spaces) are "theoretical" conceptualizations in a formal sense in that they build interrelated statements that can be manipulated according to deduction to arrive at new statements. They obey the law of excluded middle because something is either an actant technology or it is not; there is nothing that is "kind of" actant technology and the same with authentic interaction and informal social space. This kind of formulation of these concepts is different from previous formulations in that definitions have been otherwise and necessarily much more encompassing and broad. The use of exact class language here is meant to separate postmodern concepts from their previous understandings in order to construct a new kind of meaningful intersection at the points of postmodern concepts, formal constructs and specific micro-level phenomena such as individual interactions between people and/or technology.

ACTANT TECHNOLOGY

Actant technology comes from a combination of several theorists such as Baudrillard, Latour, Haraway and Ritzer. "Actants" comes from Bruno Latour (in Bijker and Law, 1992) and is his term for inorganic objects that are nevertheless involved in actively and most important for the current definition, socially constructing realities with humans. As he writes in defining actant:

> Whatever acts of shifts actions, action itself being defined by a list of performances through trials; from these performances are deduced a set of competences with which the actant is endowed; the fussion point of a metal is a trial through which the strength of an alloy is defined; the bankruptcy of a company is a trial through which the faithfulness of an ally may be defined; an actor is an actant endowed with a character (usually anthropomorphic) (259).

To further illustrate, Latour relates a story of his desiring to break seatbelt law. He gets in his car and refuses to "buckle up." A red light begins flashing and then a high-pitched alarm goes off until he capitulates and buckles his seatbelt. Latour asks the question, who is the moral agent in that story? If his intention was to break seatbelt law and he only put his seatbelt on due to the actions of a machine, then, Latour reasons, the machine was the moral agent. For those who would claim it was the engineer who created the machine and not the machine itself, Latour adds that the engineer was not present the "here and now" relationship that led to Latour's behavior was between the machine and him (*Ibid*., 225-6). This sense in which some forms of technology have seemingly been given agency independent of their creators' is what I am trying to capture in the term "actant technology."

Baudrillard deserves a central place in this formulation particularly in the sense of the interpretation of actant technology as depriving humans of something vital. As Baudrillard (2002) writes:

> At the peak of our technological performance, irresistible impression remains that something eludes us—not because we seem to have lost it (the real?), but because we are no longer in a position to see it: that, in effect, it is not we who are winning out over the world, but the world which is winning out over us. It is no longer we who think the object, but the object which thinks us. Once we lived in the age of the lost object; now it is the object which is 'losing' us, bringing about our ruin. We very much labour under the illusion that the aim of technology is to be an

> extension of man and his power; we labour under the subjective illusion of technology. But today, this operating principle is awarded by its very extension, by the unbridled virtuality we see out running the laws of physics and metaphysics. It is the logic of the system which, carrying itself beyond itself, is altering its determinations. At the same time as reaching a paroxystic stage, things have also reached a parodic one (71).

Though Latour coined the term and pointed in the direction of the definition of actant technology I am using in this project (developed further in the chapter "Shifting/Shattering Epistemes"), Baudrillard provides the sense that actant technology is something destructive to the social world; something which ends up creating the world we once created for ourselves. Again, the irony is that we have created the technology but as Baudrillard points out in the above quote, we have become the creations of (actant) technology not the other way around.

AUTHENTIC INTERACTION[19]

Authentic interaction is difficult to define because it is "grounded" in existential ontology and thus tends to make formalization according to the law of excluded middle or for the purposes of deduction problematic; this being said, however, Martin Heidegger provides some aspects of what I mean by authentic interaction in his concept of Dasein (but I feel it is necessary, since I am using Heidegger's model, to discuss authenticity borrowing from his ontological language—and I add, I do not think using this kind of language precludes it from be exact class language as it can be used [I think] according to the law of excluded middle). Dasein literally means "Being-there" in the sense of Being-within-the-world. This is not in the sense of being next to or near to

[19] For clarification, what follows is the definition of "authentic interaction" also used in the chapter "Shifting/Shattering Epistemes"

something but actually immersed with the thing as a part, independent of time, of one's Being-ness. Humans in proximity share a Being-within-the-world with one another but not a characteristic of shared Being-ness. A phenomenological occurrence of Being-within-the-world must bring Dasein as individual existential between humans as well as Dasein as world; as Heidegger writes:

> The expression 'Dasein', however, shows plainly that 'in the first instance' this entity [a person] is unrelated to Others, and that of course it can still be 'with' Others afterwards. Yet one must not fail to notice that we use the term "Dasein-with" to designate that Being for which the others who are[,] are freed within-the-world. This Dasein-with of the Others is disclosed within-the-world for a Dasein, and so too for those who are in Daseins with us, only because Dasein in itself is essentially Being-with. The phenomenological assertion that "Dasein is essentially Being-with" has an existential-ontological meaning. It does not seek to establish ontically that factically I am not present-at-hand alone, and that Others of my kind occur. If this were what is meant by the proposition that Dasein's Being-in-the-world is essentially constituted by Being-with, then Being-with would not be an existential attribute which Dasein, of its own accord, has coming to it from its own kind of Being (Heidegger, 1962, 156).[20]

Thus authentic interaction is not just existence-at-hand of others but a being-in-the-world-with Others. In order for an interaction to be authentic, people must ontologically enter into a phenomenological state of Dasein-with one another. Sitting or standing beside someone, even if there is awareness of the other's being-within-the-world, is not authentic interaction. According to Heidegger there can also be a state of Dasein-with Others as things not human but only in the sense that these things are connected in their Being with a person. Thus, from Heidegger's example, a clothing maker stands in Dasein-with the machinery making clothes only in the sense that those clothes are meant

[20] From *Being and Time*, John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, trans.

for someone. The Being-ness of the machine is not existentially given *a priori* but is associated with the clothing maker's awareness of the Being-within-the-world of another. So the question is this state of Being-there-with other people accomplished? For Heidegger, language is key.

Being-with another is dependent upon action, as the clichéd statement goes, "to do is to be." The action that brings people into Dasein-with each other is language. As Heidegger wrote:

> Thinking accomplishes the relation of Being to the essence of man [*sic*]. It does not make or cause the relation. Thinking brings this relation to Being solely as something handed over to it from Being. Such offering consists in the fact that in thinking Being comes to language. Language is the house of Being. In its home man [*sic*] dwells. Those who think and those who create with words are the guardians of this home. Their guardianship accomplishes the manifestation of Being insofar as they bring the manifestation to language and maintain it in language through their speech. Thinking does not become action only because some effect issues from it or because it is applied. Thinking acts insofar as it thinks (Heidegger, 1993, 217).[21]

In Heidegger's model the Dasein-with of people is dependent upon their thoughts being transmitted by language between one another. It is important to note that when Heidegger is discussing the guardians of the home of Being, he is not talking about some particular group of people but people in general who share their Being through language. Speech is important here as well in that it is the medium by which Being is shared. Furthermore, there is the question of phenomenology. On this point, I define authentic interaction as something that can be experienced phenomenally by either person in the interaction independent of whether the Other also phenomenally experienced the Dasein-

[21] From *Basic Writings*, David Farrell Krell, ed.

with (I break with Heidegger here as he sets up a tautology). Thus, Being-there-with occurs with another but does not have to be experienced by both for it to be defined as a Dasein-with. So, authentic interaction is defined as a state of Dasein-with that occurs between two people through the medium of speech and is phenomenologically experienced by one or more of the people.

INFORMAL SOCIAL SPACE

Informal social space refers to any non-bureaucratized geographical[22] location or personal relationship where people can enter into social interaction. It can be institutionalized in the sense that marriage is an institution and though there are bureaucratic rules connected with the process of becoming married as well as governing some aspects of marriage (such as tax law), the relationship of marriage is a relationship that is normally entered into for personal reasons. Such instances where marriage occurs for other reasons such as for politics or immigration would formalize an otherwise informal social space and thus would not fit with this definition. But marriage is just an example. Informal social spaces are those spaces people enter in to, geographically or interpersonally, for non-professional and non-bureaucratic reasons and do not have rules outside of common cultural/social norms governing them.

Assumptions/Derivations

A1- Humans desire to have more control and less risk in interactions and actant technology, by definition, *appears* to give people more control than interactions with fellow humans.

[22] An online chat room is not considered an informal social space because it is non-material and thus non-geographical.

D1- Since humans desire to have more control over interactions and since actant technology appears to give more control over interactions, people will attempt to minimize risk in interactions by preferring interaction with actant technology over other people.

A2- Humans desire more predictability in interactions and actant technology, by definition, provides more predictability in interaction than other people do.

A3- Humans equate predictability with being less risky.

D2- Since people desire more predictability in interaction, and thus less risk, people will attempt to lessen risk by choosing the more predictable interaction with actant technology over fellow humans.

D3- As Ritzer points out, predictability does not necessarily mean less risk as predictability also comes with the irrationality of rationality or, in other words, the injection of "chaos" in the most highly rationalized systems. Baudrillard contends that the creation of hyperreality is detrimental because it detracts from the authenticity of experiences. Since actant technology creates hyperreal situations by definition, choosing interaction with actant technology over fellow humans is more risky than interacting with fellow humans due to the illusion of more control and predictability.

A4- People enter informal social spaces for the purpose of interacting with other people.

D4- Since people enter informal social spaces for the purposes of interacting with fellow humans, the more a person interacts with actant technology, the person has less control over the situation and the actant technology has more (because the person has failed to

carrying out his/her intentions of interacting with other people while actant technologies' "intentions"[23] of mediating lived experiences have been accomplished).

D5- Since people enter informal social spaces with the intention of interacting with fellow humans and instead interact more with actant technology, the presence of actant technology in an informal social space *causes* a decrease in authentic interaction.

Scope Conditions/Instantiations

There cannot be a ballgame or any other form of entertainment (involving technology) that could otherwise explain a decrease in interpersonal interaction.

Forms of actant technology must be present (televisions, video games, Ipods, computers, cell phones, etc.).

The informal social space must be indoors

Groups observed at the tables can be any size ≥2

Groups and/or individuals cannot be entering the informal social space for special occasions such as celebrations of birthdays or holidays, etc.

The surrounding social area in which the informal social space in located (such as town or city) must not be unfamiliar to those who enter it (people must have resided in the area or have been in the area before the proposition is tested).

The informal social space cannot be unfamiliar to those who enter it (people must have been there at another point in time before the proposition is tested).

[23] Speaking of actant technologies' "intentions" is not meant to anthropomorphize the technology as having intentions in the same phenomenological way that humans experience having intentions but is meant only as far as having intentions is implied in the concept of "agency" and is then, by definition, a part of actant technology.

People in the informal social setting must perceive others as the same or similar social status as themselves.

Ceteris paribus

One instantiation of the scope conditions is in bars on Northgate on a night when no major sporting events are scheduled. This is an instantiation of the scope conditions because a bar on Northgate fits all the requirements of the definition of informal social space (people do not usually enter college bars for professional reasons [unless they work there but barworkers will not be counted in this study], people enter bars for interpersonal interactions). Since bars on Northgate are usually frequented by college students who are 21 years of age or older, they are usually familiar with the surrounding area due to having gone to college in the area for the past several years and the majority of which have usually been to bars on Northgate before (especially since many twenty-first birthdays are many people's first introductions to bars and those who enter the bar for the sake of celebrating a birthday will violate the scope conditions and not be counted in testing the proposition). Many of the people who go to bars in groups perceive those in the group as friends of similar or same social status (college students of a certain age wearing similar kinds of clothing) and people most often go to bars in groups and not alone. Moreover, bars on Northgate are mostly indoor bars that have many forms of actant technology present such as televisions, video games and wireless Internet infrastructures. Thus, bars on Northgate on a night when no sporting events are scheduled is one instantiation of the scope conditions. Though bars do not offer

researchers much control over independent variables, this type of research could not be done in a laboratory because it would violate the definition of an informal social space.

Instantiation of Derivations

Derivations 1 and 2 must be instantiated before derivation 3. One possible instantiation is a social situation where perceived risk, associated with interaction, is high such as a date. People may interact through the medium of technology (by talking about what is playing on the televisions for example) instead of interacting with one another without the actant technology (by discussing each other for instance). Derivation 3 then can be instantiated in many different ways and the affects of the riskiness of interacting through/with actant technology may not be immediately noticeable. An example of derivation three would be the dissolution of a romantic relationship due to constant interaction through/with the medium of actant technology (thus partners may feel they do not know one another beyond the actant technology or may discover later in the relationship something incompatible with the respective partners that could have been discovered at the onset of a relationship had it not been for the intervening construction of the dating experience through actant technology such as with online dating). Derivation 5 is dependent upon the instantiation of derivation 4. A person, sitting at a bar in a group, who has begun interaction with actant technology (for example, watching television) may find it difficult to interact with others within his/her group without the interaction being constructed through the medium of the actant technology (for instance talking about what is on the television instead of the days the group members have had). Derivation 5 can then be instantiated, people sitting in a bar

or a part of a bar without actant technology could serve as a control group (if such a bar existed on Northgate), if conversations in groups where actant technology is present is constructed by interaction with the actant technology and interactions in the other part of the bar or the other bar do not involve actant technology (people talk about their respective days rather than something they watched on television or talking on the cell phone instead of with members of the group) then derivation 5 can be failed to be rejected and the situation provides an example of an instantiation of derivation 5.

Methods

Over the course of several days, an undergraduate assistant entered the field through participant observation. Since there cannot be a high level of control or manipulation in field experiments, the assistant kept observations focused on one table and one bar stool to avoid having to keep track of multiple subjects (refer to the chapter, "Identity Construction in Bar Work" for a discussion on labeling people appearing in studies) simultaneously. As with all such field studies, there will be a relatively high degree of subjectivity involved in what will be counted as significant behaviors pertaining to the study. The undergraduate assistant watched one group at a time focusing on whether members of the group were engaging actant technology or other people. So the main difficulty here will be deciding whether the person under observation looked at, for example, the TV, the bartender or another patron. It was also noted, where possible, conversations as someone engaging a fellow could be talking about what is on TV thus the medium would still be constructing the social environment (while many of the subjects observed interacting with others at the table did so in terms

of the media, this was not added to the data as difficulties in consistency in eavesdropping occurred). Observations began when subjects took their seats and continued until they left their seats with apparent intention of not returning. The time each subject spent interacting with technology and other people was recorded using a wristwatch. The results are reported below and further details on time spent engaging each form of technology is recorded in Detailed Time Spent below.

Results

The following results are from the observation of 10 different subjects gathered over several days of observation at a prominent bar on Northgate. Five of the subjects came in alone and sat on a stool at the bar and five came in with groups and sat at tables. Those who sat at the bar were closer to a bank of televisions than those who sat at tables (see Table 1 below).

Table 1. ANOVA of How Time Was Spent

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
TimeSocial	Between Groups	2881.167	1	2881.167	17.636	.003
	Within Groups	1306.977	8	163.372		
	Total	4188.144	9			
TimeTech	Between Groups	254.218	1	254.218	2.339	.165
	Within Groups	869.496	8	108.687		
	Total	1123.714	9			
TimeNothing	Between Groups	18.632	1	18.632	26.825	.001
	Within Groups	5.557	8	.695		
	Total	24.189	9			

One of the possible readings of the above text is that people who sit farther from technology "significantly" spend more time doing nothing or interacting with other people than people who sit closer to technology. Overall time spent interacting with technology, however, does not change "significantly" whether a person is sitting farther or closer or entered the bar alone or with a group. Below, in Table 2, are the descriptive statistics for how much time was spent in each of the three categories (being social, interacting with technology or doing "nothing").

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of How Time Was Spent

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
propSocial	10	.00	.83	.3888	.31739
propTech	10	.15	1.00	.5850	.33394
propNothing	10	.00	.10	.0262	.03397
Valid N (listwise)	10				

The above text can be read as the proportion of total and average time spent in each activity for both groups. This particular intersection of meaning can be interpreted as when people from both locations in the bar are taken together, they spent almost 60% of all their time spent in the bar interacting with technology. These data change when the focus is on the group sitting closest to the televisions in the bar (see Table 3 below).

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of How Time Was Spent for TV Group

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
propSocial	5	.00	.46	.1509	.19076
propTech	5	.54	1.00	.8491	.19076
propNothing	5	.00	.00	.0000	.00000
Valid N (listwise)	5				

Depending on how they are manipulated, the amount of time spent in different interactions varies widely as demonstrated in the text above and below. Above, the proportion of total time spent interacting with technology by people sitting at the bar (directly in front of the TV banks) who came in alone was 85% while 15% of their time was spent interacting with others. Table 4 below lists the same data for the group sitting at tables farther away from the technology provided by the bar.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of How Time Was Spent for Table Group

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
propSocial	5	.38	.83	.6267	.22085
propTech	5	.15	.56	.3209	.20047
propNothing	5	.03	.10	.0523	.02974
Valid N (listwise)	5				

When looking at the numerical representations of the people observed sitting in a group at a table, the majority of their time was spent interacting with others but almost a third of their time was still spent interacting with technology. Table 5 below looks at the question of significance in this micro study.

Table 5. Test for Significance

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
propSocial	Between Groups	.566	1	.566	13.291	.007
	Within Groups	.341	8	.043		
	Total	.907	9			
propTech	Between Groups	.697	1	.697	18.212	.003
	Within Groups	.306	8	.038		
	Total	1.004	9			
propNothing	Between Groups	.007	1	.007	15.488	.004
	Within Groups	.004	8	.000		
	Total	.010	9			

According to the manipulations presented above (a t-test), even though only ten people altogether were observed and represented numerically here, the proportion of time spent for people in each group in each interaction is "significant" to the general population. This is particularly interesting considering that when I asked colleagues (in the past as well as while working on this study) who use these forms of methodology how it would be possible to tell what could be generalized to an entire population, I was told that "because the t-test says so." This adds a necessary degree of reflexivity to the discussion

at hand. While conducting a study looking at the construction of bar experiences for patrons by technology, the sociology being used to create meaning around this topic is being constructed by the technology as well as through a kind of statistical/technological "magic." In this sense, it is not necessary to know if or why something is so, it simply is (as in a children's religious song) because the technology[24] told me so…

Discussion

THE DATA

The data partially supports the original proposition. When going to the bar alone, people spent almost the entire time interacting with technology; when going in a group, however, people spent the same amount of time interacting with technology but since they tended to spend more time in the bar, the overall proportion of time spent interacting with people was greater than the time spent interacting with technology. When conversations could be heard though, people tended to be talking about television shows and other hyperreal cultural artifacts; these data were listed as human interaction because it was not possible to overhear every conversation. Were it possible to somehow make out each conversation, the amount of time spent interacting with technology would have been much higher for people who came in with a group.

THE METHOD

Many postmodernity deniers criticize postmodern scholars' concepts for their lack of testability and operationalization. Proponents of modernistic theories and positivistic methodologies thus approach social and cultural phenomena with blinders—

[24] Instead of "Bible."

if it cannot be operationalized, codified and categorized, it does not exist…. In this sense then, culture and society must occur in a vacuum where it can be tested, atomized and falsified and the presence of "outliers" or those in the margins, eradicated. Much context, depth, creativity and intertextuality is lost on the road to the monolith. As Latour wrote:

> [W]e understand the symmetry of the work achieved simultaneously by Hobbes and Boyle, and we might locate the practice of science that they have described. Boyle is not simply creating a scientific discourse while Hobbes is doing the same thing for politics; Boyle is creating a political discourse from which politics is to be excluded, while Hobbes is imagining a scientific politics from which experimental science has to be excluded. In other words, they are inventing our modern world, a world in which the representation of things through the intermediary of the laboratory is forever dissociated from the representation of citizens through the intermediary of the social contract. So it is not at all by oversight that political philosophers have ignored Hobbes's science, while historians of science have ignored Boyle's positions on the politics of science. All of them had to 'see double' from Hobbes's and Boyle's day on, and not establish direct relations between the representation of nonhumans and the representation of humans, between the artificiality of facts and the artificiality of the Body Politic (Latour, 1993, 27).

This kind of scientific approach is worthwhile, it does help us create meaning but when it is considered the legitimated method of meaning generation par excellence, the modernist focus on the capitalistic teleology of knowledge maintains its autocratic hold on intellectual freedom. Science, particularly positivistic forms of science, hold a place of high esteem in American sociology and as such, a project such as the present one cannot fail to discuss the methodology.

Operationalizing postmodern concepts and then creating a study design to test the proposition and operationalizations has been an interesting experience that highlighted the epistemological barriers of the approach. For instance, considering that almost

everyone in the U.S. owns and carries a cell phone, how is it possible to control for proximity to the technology? Since every bar in the area under study has a TV in it, how do you set up a control group? It is not possible to study these concepts in the artificial setting of a laboratory as that would decontextualize and thus mute the very cultural phenomena you are trying to study. So, the design presented here is highly subjective and simplistic out of necessity.

PARODY AND MEANING

This chapter is much "cruder" than the others in the present project. From the title to this discussion, I have attempted to engage the subjects at hand directly with a Nietzschean "gay science." As discussed in the methods chapter, Nietzsche wrote of two kinds of wills to truth; one was the kind that sought to maintain the myth of Truth through religion and later science- the other was a constant "poking," "prodding" and a laughing at the illusions and beliefs in Truth that we all have in varying ways (much like Freud's notion of delusions, Nietzsche argues that we could not function in a social world without our illusions). This second will to truth is playful and, to steal a term from Durkheim, sui generis. This search for truth is as much creation as destruction as Nietzsche argued behind every illusion is yet another illusion but that is the creation of knowledge.

This chapter does two contradictory things: firstly, it criticizes positivistic and formal approaches to society and culture through a postmodern parodic application to postmodern concepts (such approaches necessarily fail to comprehend postmodern concepts due to basic epistemological assumptions such as the possibility of

understanding social phenomena by creating a closed system and taxonomy in which to encapsulate it); secondly, this study also argues a salient stance taken by scholars such as Bauman, Baudrillard and Lyotard that the ubiquity of technology, especially in centers formerly used for solidifying communal bonds (discussed more in "Shifting/Shattering Epistemes"), is directly linked with the decline of communal solidarity and the possibility of organic or non-technological social interactions. Though this point is made here through a methodological parody, the meaning generated here at these theoretical and methodological intersections is still meant in "all seriousness." The effect technology and particularly communicative technologies is having on authentic social interaction can be easily seen in public places. In bars people are watching TV and playing video games while surrounded by people; in restaurants and coffee shops it is common to see people who go to these public places formerly of social interaction alone (as Baudrillard points out in *America*) and then sit on their laptops catching up with "friends" through Facebook instead of meeting with them in the restaurants and coffee shops. In the colleges, where once undergraduate students would congregate in impromptu discussion groups and debates it is not uncommon to see students standing in a group and every person in the group talking with someone else on a cell phone. Even in classes, it is not unusual to see students (masters of multi-tasking that they are) texting, tweeting and/or blogging on their mobile devices during lecture and discussion. It is possible to list example after example from more and more once social arenas constituting a death of the unmediated society; as Baudrillard (2002) writes, "You can

imagine a culture where everyone laughs spontaneously when someone says: 'This is true', 'This is real'" (96).

Conclusion

To conclude, I believe Baudrillard said it best when he wrote,

> Can one advance the hypothesis that beyond the objective and critical phase there is an ironic phase of science, an ironic phase of technology? A proposition which would deliver us from the Heideggerian vision of technology as the final phase of metaphysics, from the retrospective nostalgia for being and from all unhappy critique in terms of alienation and disenchantment. And would put in its place a conception of the gigantic objective irony of this whole process, which would not be far from radical snobbery, from the post-historical snobbery Kojéve spoke of. It seems, in fact, that though the illusion of the world has been lost, the irony of the world, for its part, has passed into things. It seems that technology has taken into itself all the illusion it has caused us to lose, and that what we have in return for the loss of illusion is the emergence of an objective irony of this world (Baudrillard, 2002, 72).

Detailed Time Spent

Below is Table 6 looking at the amount of time each technology was used.

Table 6. Amount of Time Spent with Various Forms of Technology

Cell phone	TV	Camera	Bar Worker
2m 20s	2m 23s	2m 5s	5m 5s
35s	22m3s	0	0
3m 32s	3m 55s	31m	0
	6m 2s	1m 54s	4m 20s
1m27s	1m29s	0	3m22s
1m49s	7m36s	0	4m1s
	2m12s	0	2m26s
1m55s	1m24s	0	3m51s
1m47s	3m44s	0	2m52s
0	5m51s	0	3m23s

CHAPTER VI

SHIFTING/SHATTERING EPISTEMES: AUTHENTICITY, SOCIAL DISCOURSE AND TECHNOLOGICAL MEANINGS IN TAVERNS, SALOONS AND BARS

In keeping with the theme of the previous chapter, this study looks at the inclusion of technology in bars from a historical perspective. Taverns, saloons, inns, coffee houses, grog houses, speakeasies, bars, whatever label they go by these houses of drink have played central roles in the history of the United States. They have served as meeting places, community and economic centers as well as places of respite. They have also been social spaces for contentious politics and interactions between people, institutions and of particular interest to this analysis, technologies. There are many areas in which bars and technologies come together be they various building technologies over time used to construct bars, to glass making techniques, to brewing and refrigeration technologies. My interest here, however, is in those technologies that directly impact the social milieu of bars and the effects those technologies have had over time is shaping and altering human interactions and the relationships among people, barworkers and patrons alike, and the social space of bars.

This study takes a comparative historical approach across regions within the United States looking at four major moments from the eighteenth to the twenty-first century. I am not conducting a comprehensive study across all regions and time-periods (as this could fill several volumes) but instead attempting to establish, in part, a

foundation of bars in America as a part of the nation-wide collective consciousness (Durkheim, 1997) independent of particular local varieties. I argue that as technologies have changed over time and have been incorporated into bars, social interaction has changed in such a way that the bar has lost its character of social haven to a character of mediated experiences through technologies. I take the position here both that shifts in culture lead to shifts in technology and social interaction and also that changes in technology also directly effects social interactions.

Methodology/Epistemologies

Proposing to cover such a wide period of time in so few pages will no doubt raise eyebrows but I am taking as my methodological foundation Michel Foucault's (1998) nonlinear genealogical approach and am not engaged in an attempted construction of technologies in bars throughout three centuries. Foucault (1994) criticizes historians for being too comfortable with dividing time and history arbitrarily by political and military regimes. Moreover, classifications become problematic in that they are always embedded within politicized discourse (such as Linnaeus and our classification as Mammals as a ploy to fix species definition on mammary glands in order to highlight the political debate on breast feeding during the eighteenth century) which amounts to a kind of presentism that is either projected into the past or, once embedded within academic discourse, perennially projected into the future and thus setting the stage for discourse for generations. By proposing a nonlinear approach, I am not attempting a comment on phenomenology *per se* but epistemology and, particularly, Foucault's notion of episteme. The sociology of knowledge, in a grand sense, is situated and contextual

along any number of structural axes; as such, it is an organizing principle that is not necessarily, in praxis, consciously invoked. As Foucault argues, these organizing principles, conscious or otherwise, tend to shift, subtly, sometimes suddenly due to shifts in institutions and reworking of power webs (such as in a revolution) or the creation and legitimation of new knowledges (such as technological changes) and the organizing epistemological principles fundamentally change. For the study at hand, I will be looking at these shifts in terms of technologies in bars in terms of collective consciousness (episteme) and civil religion as the love/hate relationship that America has had with alcohol and bars over the centuries points to a totemic reverence/reversion that is very powerful and yet bounded socially while the social has been bounded by the technologic from the printing press to video poker.

Technology

It is important here to establish the differing ways in which I am using the general concept of technology. I break technology into three basic camps here: human technology, non-human technology and actant technology. These categories are not exclusive and many technologies necessarily bleed through any arbitrarily constructed lines. These theoretical constructs are meant only as ideal types or affixed labels over qualitative aspects occurring in patterns; as such, these labels should not be taken to be intended comprehensive in anyway. Human technology is considered technology that humans manipulate according to their own designs and that there is very little control over functionality embedded within the technological artifact itself (Ritzer, 2004). Technology both promotes agency as well as constricting human actions; however, non-

human technology then is taken as those technologies or systems that constrict human decision-making far more than increasing human agency and constrict the possible uses of the artifact. These kinds of technologies do not necessarily have to be material and can include bureaucratic or other institutional controls. The main aspect here is that non-human technologies deny human reason and construct rational, standard, routine and largely homogenized modes of interaction. To borrow an example from George Ritzer, an oven in a fast food restaurant that beeps when it is time for the fry cook to flip the burger denies the cook the skills to cook food according to his/her own sets of knowledge. The oven is situated not only in relation to the laborer of whom it exerts control but also within the bureaucratic axes that organize hierarchical business structures and the subsequent rules the laborer must follow (*ibid.*). The social structure surrounding the technology (such as the bureaucracy of the fast food restaurant) adds to the sense of alienation and constriction and indeed helps create the demand for such technologies, however, as Marshall McLuhan argues, "the medium is the message." People may have created these technologies but, once created, they stand as shining examples of the Marxist object/subject reversal where human subjects are reified as objects and objects determine the expression of human behavior (for all intents and purposes, become subjects).

Actant technology refers to technology that is actively involved in constructing lived experiences for people using the technology. As such, not all technologies are actant technologies. This definition can be situated within other texts such as Donna Haraway's (1997) writings on cyborgs, Jean Baudrillard's (2006) discussions of

hyperreality as well as Bruno Latour's "actants" where objects are seen as engaging in social construction along with humans (Bijker and Law, 1992). While Latour discusses technology's agency as a moral relation with humans, Haraway discusses technology in terms of having agency independent of its creator's. In this way, she discusses how cyborgs (and she implies, admittedly tautologically, that we are all cyborgs) can ironically exist between discursive boundaries of technoscience and the military-industrial complex. She sees this situation as beneficial and liberating. Baudrillard, however, writes requiems for reality. He argues that through technology, we have been able to create alternate realities that seem more real than "the" real (the "text-book" definition of "hyperreality"). Baudrillard argues that this goes beyond things like the Internet or television to theme parks, scenery and even people's smiles.

From the above three theorists, actant technology is that which constructs an experience of reality for people that exists independently of any purposed *alteration* of lived experience. In other words, actant technology actively creates a medium for experience that subtly yet fundamentally alters lived experience outside the medium. To clarify, technology is a medium that is both created and controlled by humans and though it alters lived experience, as does most things, it does so only in relation to its use as a tool by humans; whereas actant technology is a technological medium that is created by humans (initially) but controls humans in its use and actively constructs and alters, in anomic ways, lived experience by its very existence (by creating alternate experiences *in place* of experiences merely through human senses). Though I am using the above three categorizations of technology in different ways, actant technology is further clarified by

George Ritzer's ideas on non-human technology. As human technology is like a screwdriver, a tool that is largely controlled by a human (though granted, as a medium even screwdrivers are limiting in some ways; the important difference is the question of constructing experiences that are anomic by their existence); non-human technology is something that destroys the subject/object divide (his Marxist influences) and controls humans—the technology is not a tool for humans but humans are the tools of the technology. In this way, Haraway's discussion of the processes of cyborgization takes on a different meaning where the mechanization of lived experiences becomes a defining element of the experience or, in other words, it is not a mechanization of lived experience or bodies but the technological medium *is* the lived experience—the medium determines what is lived and in so doing, destroys authentic interaction[25] between people.

Establishing a Totem

Robert Bellah (Bellah and Hammond1980) has argued that nations create civil religions in which political leaders enter into the realm of religious symbolism.[26] As he focuses on the United States for his examples, he argues that this civil religion can be traced back to the framers, who, while disallowing any law to be passed on religion, did not establish a strict division between politics and religion as those of a more radical separatist leaning would insist. On the "civil" side of this equation, it is argued that particular political leaders such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson take on a kind of mythic and symbolic quality with surrounding symbolism for patriotism and

[25] See the chapter "The Medium Is The Bar Experience" for definition.
[26] Bellah builds off the work of Tocqueville, Rousseau and Durkheim.

moral fortitude. Particular places like Monticello then take on iconographic importance within the American civil religion with the requisite pilgrimage by droves of Americans every year akin to someone who subscribed to the Roman Catholic faith visiting the Vatican. It is in this sense that places where these "saints" of the American civil religion once walked are "holy" sites; locales representing the nascent United States that take on a kind of totem-like quality (Bellah and Hammond, 1980).[27]

In the particular technologic episteme in which the American Revolution is situated, a particular type of establishment becomes a totem of American civil religion: the tavern. The episteme itself is one that is associated with the technology of the printing press that allowed such pamphleteers as Thomas Paine to disseminate tracts such as *Common Sense* to so wide a demographic (Durey, 1987). It is also what allowed a proliferation of print media that kept news and opinions from around the colonies in wide circulation (Waldstreicher, 1995). And, as these circulations increased the colonists' rebellious fervor, the taverns were the social spaces in which they found their collective expression. As Charles Steffen (2003) has pointed out, taverns in the early United States were expected to carry several newspapers and not just the local ones. To further highlight this, he points out that by 1810 there were twenty-two million newspapers printed annually in the United States (381); in quoting Nathan Hale from Boston's *Daily Advertiser* in 1814, "if we have any striking traits of national character, their origin may be clearly discerned in our universal relish for newspaper reading, and

[27] By totem I mean in a Freudian/Durkheimian sense of a symbolic object that carries seemingly contradictory reverence and taboo rituals implied by the very existence of the object—see for instance Freud's *Totem and Taboo*.

in the general character of the newspapers we read" (*ibid*.).[28] The dominance of the printing press as a defining aspect of this particular episteme coincides with the dominance of the tavern as totem for civil religion as it held the place of the community center (Business Historical Society, 1928).

From the founding of the colonies, North America has inherited a civil religion connected with a drinking culture from Britain and with it, the dominance of the tavern (Lender and Martin, 1982; Conroy, 1995; Mendelson and Mello, 1985; Burns, 2004; Albertson, 1950). Taverns were seen as being so important to a town it was often one of the first buildings constructed in building a town (Thorp, 1996). These social spaces were sites of solidification for communal boundaries where people would be able to discuss goings-on around town as well as the latest news. As with the tavern as totem, going to the tavern was a kind of ritual in which norms and expectations were reified. It is small wonder then that the tavern played a central role in the American Revolution. As Eric Burns (2004) puts it:

> Why did New York merchants gather at Burn's Tavern on Broadway to plan a boycott of British goods in response to the stamp act? Why did Bostonians organize their tea party at the Green Dragon Tavern? Why did Virginia's Committee of Correspondence, and later the Intercolonial Committees, conduct their insurrectionary business at the Sir Walter Raleigh Tavern in Williamsburg? Why did Samuel Adams and John Hancock and their friends fan the flames of independence at the Black Horse Inn in Winchester, Massachusetts? Why did Captain John Parker make Buckman's Tavern on Lexington Green the headquarters for the Minutemen? Why did Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys convene at the Catamount in Bennington, Vermont? Why did John Adams meet George Washington for the first time at the City Tavern in Philadelphia? Why, in fact, was it considered "the greatest gathering

[28] It is also important to note that this goes along with Riesman's argument that newspaper reading is an aspect of the inner-directed social character type.

> place for members of Congress"? Why did Thomas Jefferson begin writing the Declaration of Independence at the Indian Queen Tavern in the same city, a brimming glass of Madeira next to his bottle of ink? (7).

Burns concludes, and I agree, that it was the tavern's paradoxically central yet ambivalent position to the social reality of the colonies that made it the rich ground for the ideological and philosophical foundations of the revolution. He also believes that it was the tavern and not the church that was the center. Alexis de Tocqueville (2000), however, argues that both the tavern and the church held social powers in tandem (though often in opposition) with one another. In illustrating the centrality of the church in New England, Tocqueville wrote:

> The Code of 1650 abounds with preventive measures. Laziness and drunkenness are severely punished. Innkeepers cannot furnish more than a certain quantity of wine to each consumer: a fine or the whip repress a simple lie when it can do harm. In other places, the legislator, forgetting completely the great principles of religious liberty he himself demanded in Europe, forces attendance at divine service by fear of fines, and he goes as far as to strike with severe penalties, and often death, Christians who wish to worship God according to a form other than his (38-9).

While the above quote may seem Draconian to contemporary readers, Tocqueville is quick to add that these morals laws were passed down from a "wild past" (referring to the old testament of the Christian Bible) and that Puritans, though having the laws, were slow to enact the proscribed punishments. In this way, taverns maintained a high level of importance in the original American colonies in face of religious communities who, at least publicly, asserted their moral dubiousness. An example of how this ambivalence surrounding taverns has been passed down to Americans today can be seen in the wide variety of "Blue Laws" across the States where, in having such a privileged position in the laws created for it, alcohol becomes both demonized and romanticized. In colonial

times, it was the particular blending of technologic and social, the printing press and the tavern that formed the cultural backdrop of that episteme.

The printing press is a human technology. It is a tool that is largely controlled by humans and which end result is a broader sharing of knowledge (as well as ads and other items other than "news") thus increasing authentic social interaction between people. The existence of an informal social center such as the tavern then furthers interaction and collective behavior. The episteme in which the American Revolution occurred is historically situated with the Protestant Reformation two and a half centuries earlier (Eisenstein, 1968). In both epistemes, contested boundaries were drawn around discourse brought about, in large part, to the melding of the technic and organic. In both cases a hegemon (Rome and Britain, respectively) were directly confronted through a technological widening of discursive realms (the Gutenberg Bible and pamphlets and newspapers respectively). Moreover, the historic link between these to epistemes is underscored by Max Weber's (2002) connection between the Protestant Reformation and the Spirit of Capitalism as portrayed in the moral precepts of Ben Franklin's *Poor Richard's Almanac*. In the episteme of the late eighteenth century, the tavern was then the material space par excellence through which such organic (read human) and technologic discursive contestations were culturally embedded (Schlesinger, 1955).

Asserting the Phallus

While taverns or saloons still maintain a place of reverence within American civil religion during the 1800's and also retain the position of center of a town or settlement, the episteme changed. Cultural knowledge came to be situated in reference

to the performance of masculinity as symbolized technologically by that deadly phallus the gun. In discussing the 1800's in terms of masculinity and the gun there is a trap that would be easy to fall into—the popular image of the Western saloon as depicted by Hollywood Westerns. The problem with this image is manifold. It is too simplistic and does not capture the camaraderie in the West as not every Western saloon was the place of nightly brawls (Dixon, 2005); it fails to illustrate that the saloon also served as the economic center for western settlements and so fulfilled a variety of social functions; it also focuses attention on the violence of the West (inherited from a Southern culture of violence) and fails to notice that, as a collective, the United States entered into a period of hyper-masculinity and violence during the 1800's that was often located around and/or in saloons in the North, South, East and West.

Local areas are sites of irruptions of broader discourses and the cultural character of the United States in the nineteenth century was dominated by images of penetration. Manifest destiny and the cry "Go West young man" came with metaphors of "virgin" land and the drive to "expansion." Though men were not the only ones who perpetuated this national psyche it was a masculine culture. As one female commentator in Montana wrote, "I have just witnessed a most shocking sight—a woman so intoxicated that she couldn't walk without assistance. She was taken into a house just opposite and as she stepped in the door she fell sprawling to the floor beastly drunk. Alas! Alas!… how humiliating to a true woman to know that any of her sex can become so vile" (West, 1996, 2). That this frontierswoman was shocked at this behavior by another woman points to the strict gender boundaries still maintained and the dominant cultural

expression being male. Pamela Haag (1992) also documented the incidents of violence in New York in the 1800s as indicative of a wide spread male culture of violence and argues that it was not only violence against other males but violence of males on females as well. Violence in this way acts as exclusionary gender politics (though this is not an attempt to neutralize moral valuations of this violence through language) in which women are kept out of social centers such as saloons or are relegated to roles as prostitutes. Homicide rates, particularly during the latter half of the nineteenth century, skyrocketed across the country (Haag, 1992) and especially in the South of reconstruction and as West (1996) has pointed out, this was connected with the prevalence of handguns.

In this sense, the saloon was not only the center of communities but also for the code of masculine identity and the social power, maintained through violence, of that identity. Some scholars have argued that this identity was a part of a general rebellion against class politics in urban area such as the "b'hoys" in Jacksonian New York (Kaplan, 1995; Gorn, 1987) and the "mania for murder" that gripped Chicago at the end of the nineteenth century (Adler, 1997). While I agree with the assertion that the tavern must be located at the center of the process of constructing this identity, I disagree that this can be wholly explained by class as it fails to take into consideration similar identity politics occurring in rural and transition areas and areas with relatively little social stratification along class lines (such as mining communities) (West, 1996). Much more salient to this discussion is the prevalent "expansionist mentality" and the way in which guns became the medium by which messages of masculinity were conveyed (McKanna,

1995[29]). This was a result of a combination of guns, alcohol and a culture of violence that was widespread but particularly present in the South and through the South, the West (as discussed in the chapter, "Unfashionable Racism").

In both public and private arenas, America's population during this episteme was armed. Many saw and still see this as a right set down in the second amendment (though that pertains only to militias). The irony here is, as discussed above, much of the framing of the United States was done under the influence of alcohol and led to the violence of the saloons later. A correlate to contemporary times, at the writing of this chapter (2009) debates are occurring surrounding the question of allowing people to carry firearms onto college campuses and state parks. Guns would constitute a human technology but take on a sense of agency in an interesting way. That people carried guns with them illustrates the process of cyborgization (Haraway, 1997) and the subsequent condensing of time and space in which the physical extension of the body (the bullet) can reach a given destination makes the gun one of the first systems of (near) instant communication—the person having the most skill with the technology getting to communicate the final point. This is important to emphasize—the gun was the discursive technology of the nineteenth century; it was a discourse in finality though and one where authentic human action had high stakes. Such an episteme is not new as one could see the culture of England during the Hundred Years War as hyper-masculinized where the communicative technology of the day was the longbow carrying the discourse of "just war" politics. In this sense the discourse was directly on a national level where

[29] Though I differ from McKanna in that she focuses on the West and I argue this was a national phenomena.

the expressions were national (between England and France) so the American innovation would individualize the interaction where "just war" became "law of the gun" (Lowe, 1990). Yet the interaction between people could be authentic; the medium of the gun did not actively construct the interaction, the prevalent character of the nation constructed the gun. This imbues the technology with a kind of "borrowed" agency; the presence of the gun in a given social context necessitates the use of the gun as the communication technology par excellence given the hyper-masculinized culture but it is that culture which necessitates not the gun itself. In this sense, the gun carried with it the weight of the collective and the social expectations of the performance of the code of masculinity. Women who became proficient in the use of guns such as the famed Annie Oakley, can be read as having been co-opted or "colonized" by gun culture. The gun was more than the technological aspect of the episteme; as the saloon was the locus of discourse of gendered power physically reified, the gun was also a symbol of Americanism; its totem and physical manifestation.

Sleeping It Off on the Wagon

It is interesting that in a nation where bars are a central part of a civil religion something such as the eighteenth amendment could be ratified but on January 16, 1919 prohibition became the law of the land (Mello and Mendelson, 1985). As Ritzer (2004) argues, control by nonhuman technology includes control by formalized social systems such as bureaucracies. The episteme in which prohibition is situated was dominated by nonhuman technology on a national level. Though the Temperance Movement had existed in America for a century before Prohibition and thus there are aspects of this

episteme stretching back into the hyper-masculine culture of the 1800s, Prohibition stands out as an episteme in and of itself (though it only lasted roughly a decade) as a strange moment in the history of technology where a political apparatus ideally functioning as an expression of the collective, functioned in contra-distinction to collective culture. The temperance movement exists as a feminizing, to an extent, of American culture in contradistinction to the previous hyper-dominance of the phallus as women led the Temperance Movement. Prohibition thus stands as an episteme marked by contentious boundaries where the carved-out, "illegal" social spaces called "speakeasies" stood in ironic contradiction between discursive boundaries of legality and illegality where human reason could find expression. Thus, speakeasies became a kind of social human technology of rebellion against the rationalistic yet unreasonable bureaucratic mechanisms of Prohibition (Murphy, 1994; Burns, 2004).

Part of the reason why the collective imploded over saloons in the time leading up to Prohibition seems, in part, to be due to the way those of lower socio-economic status are read culturally in the United States. As Weber (2002) argues, the moral reasoning of the Protestant Reformation and particularly the theological determinism of Calvinism with its idea of predestination was incorporated into the Spirit of Capitalism in such a way that those who were economically poor were seen as inferior to those who were not much in the same way that those who were not Christians were seen as inferior to those who were. Weber's analysis has a great deal of explanatory power as we can point to examples today of people who rely on welfare programs such as food stamps being criticized for using stamps to buy higher priced items such as steaks or to the

myths of "welfare queens." This is a cultural aspect of the United States that cuts across epistemes and as "bar culture" has long been linked with "working class culture" in the U.S., this aspect takes on particular salience in regards to Prohibition. As the recommendations made by the "Committee of Fifty for the investigation of the Liquor Problem" (Raymond Calkins, 1971, xxvii) originally in 1901 and then again in 1919 under the title "Substitutes for the Saloon" illustrate, there is a general fear of the working class in America as being less socially controllable. The recommendations further demonstrate an acknowledgement of the saloon as social center and that merely removing saloons would create a social vacuum that could lead to as many problems as the ones perceived to be caused by alcohol.

Prohibition is seen as being maintained by nonhuman technology by virtue of the denial of human reason. For example, in 1929 in New York City alone there was an estimated thirty-two thousand speakeasies (Burns, 2004, 197). There are stories of whole families being arrested for the distillation of alcohol throughout the 1920s (Murphy, 1994). Off-duty police officers and local politicians reportedly frequented speakeasies throughout the U.S. and Prohibition gave rise to powerful crime organizations surrounding bootlegging operations (Burns, 2004). These aspects serve to demonstrate the irrationality of rationality (Ritzer, 2004) that goes along with nonhuman technologies. The eighteenth amendment was a rationalistic code situated within a rationalized social system; in this case, however, in denied human reason and ended up causing the very social ills it was intended to fix (such as violent crime). In this way, the speakeasy emerges as a social technology that while existing outside of legality cannot,

in an informal sense, be said to have been illegal by virtue of patrons who represented the legal order. In this sense, the speakeasy existed between discursive boundaries where those who engaged in social drinking were engaged in contentious politics not in the sense of activism *per se* but in the sense of service to human authenticity. This episteme is analogous to England and the American colonies in the early and middle eighteenth century in which cheap gin became available to working class people. In 1751, William Hogarth did a set of prints dealing with "Beer Street" and "Gin Lane" (see Images below) in which he echoed the sentiments of the time that while beer is good for the lower classes, alcohol would lead to lawlessness and violence (Mancall, 1997).

The Pacman Conspiracy

In this final section, I argue that we have entered a new episteme. As I have to show in the previous sections, each episteme could be historically situated, nonlinearly but situated nonetheless, with a past episteme; this new period we have entered makes a break historically and is dominated by nonhuman and agent technologies. I argue that this new episteme began during the 1970s and can be represented by the incorporation of controlled pouring spouts (as nonhuman technology) and televisions and video games (as agent technologies) into bars (Campbell-Kelly, 2004). There is a wealth of data on the proliferation of video games in bars but due to time constraints, I was unable to procure these datasets for this version of the paper and as such will rely mostly on ethnographic data that I have collected.

Campbell-Kelly dates the beginning of the video arcade games moving into bars in 1972 (*ibid*., 272). From the beginning, computer games were highly desired consumer items; as Campbell-Kelly notes, "[b]y the 1980s, rare was the American home with a teenage son that did not own a video game consol" (*ibid*.). As Ritzer (1999) has argued, the electronic boom is connected with the new means of consumption where time and space have been all but eliminated and avenues of consumptions have infiltrated all social spaces imploding once distinct boundaries (such as shopping online at home). The new communicative technologies such as computers and television (I would add video games here though they are not communicative technologies *per se*, they are of the same ilk as televisions and computers) are agent technologies in the sense that people interact with one another through these instead of experiencing unmediated interaction (online dating for instance). As actant technology has moved into virtually all social arenas, those areas of life have been fundamentally changed. In the bars, Dan[30], a four year manager of a bar in North Gate, calls those who have grown up with agent technologies in their lives the "Nintendo Generation" and makes the observation that the younger generations coming into bars now interact much less with one another and tend to prefer playing coin-operated games alone or, if with another person, the interaction is limited only to the medium at hand. This represents a new kind of discursive boundary in the once totem of Americanism and communal center. The discourse of actant technology is totalizing; there are now between boundaries or conflicting discourses for that matter once engaged within the technology itself where

[30] All names have been changed.

people become anomic or disassociated from one another (even as I write this, I am doing so on a computer connected to the internet with alerts telling me when someone is attempting to "interact" with me via e-mail) (Ritzer, 1999).

Roger, an older eight-year veteran of barwork commented that older bar patrons interact in terms of technologic mediums. He has noticed that while they talk with one another, they do so in terms of what they are watching on the television at the bar. In many ways, the inclusion of actant technology in bars is good business, as Nightclub and Bar Magazine discussed (March, 2006) electronic entertainment is very lucrative both in enticing patrons as well as in generating new revenue. This illustrates the shift in the new means of consumption to totalizing discourses. Taverns through history have been businesses but they were also about the social. In this new episteme, as implied by Nightclub and Bar Magazine, actant technology is expected and if absent from a bar, the bar can expect "slow nights with only a few regulars" (*ibid.*). Moreover, it is not actant technology in and of itself that is causing these changes but the episteme of hyper-consumption and rationalizing systems geared toward consumption (Ritzer, 1999). Nonhuman technology plays its role here as well as evidenced by "precision pours" (2007). These are simple pour spouts that allow only an ounce of alcohol to be poured at a time. In this process, bartending skills are being "blackboxed" in order to save money as well as to control bartenders that might otherwise over pour for friends or regulars.

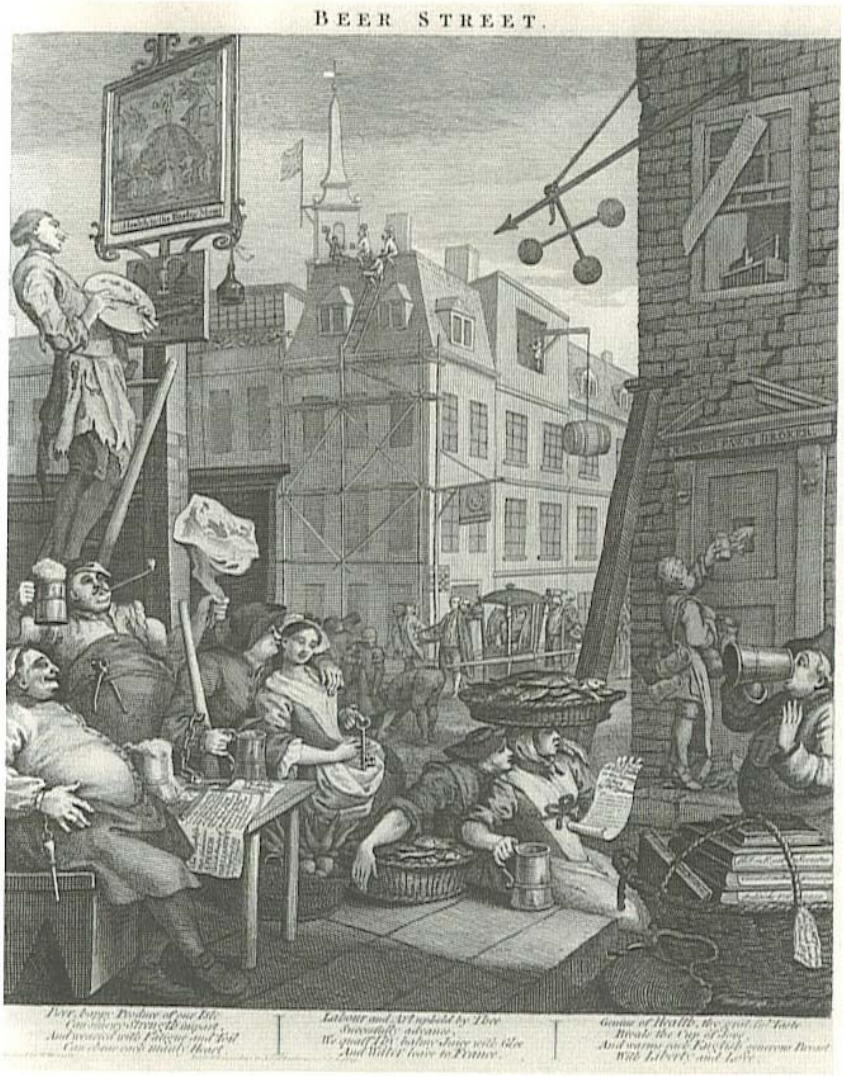
In conclusion, I have attempted to apply Michel Foucault's model of nonlinear epistemic history and a combination a several theories of technology ranging from George Ritzer to Donna Haraway and Jean Baudrillard to Bruno Latour to the history of

technology in bars. Focusing on four major epistemes in the United States—the American Revolution, the nineteenth century, Prohibition and the Nintendo Generation—I have discussed the changing social spheres of bars within the American civil religion and the discursive space in which bars have been situated in these epistemes. The episteme in which we are now located is one of social fragmentation where people are engaged in the mediums of actant technology rather than in authentic interaction with one another; where once strong communal boundaries have broken down to be replaced with superficiality and anomie.

Figures 1 and 2, Beer Street and Gin Lane respectively, are reproduced below.

Images

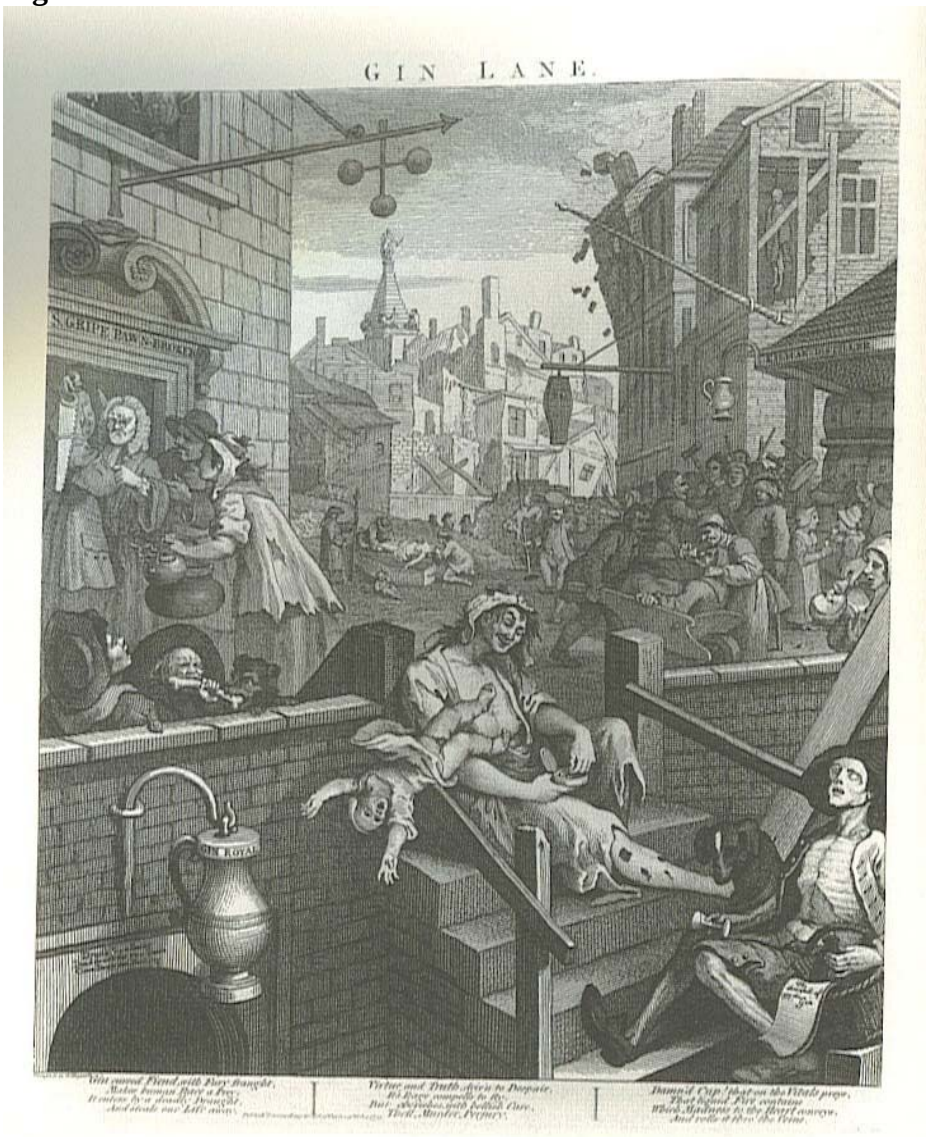
Figure 1. Beer Street



4. William Hogarth, *Beer Street*. As Hogarth makes clear in this image from 1751, a society in which beer is the primary beverage is free of social ills; peace and contentment rule the day. Courtesy, Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas (Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Dolph Simons, Jr.).

Source: Mancall, 1997, 21.

Figure 2. Gin Lane



5. William Hogarth, *Gin Lane*. "What must become an infant who is conceived in *Gin*? with the poisonous Distillations of which it is nourished, both in the Womb and at the Breast?" asked the novelist and temperance reformer Henry Fielding in 1751. Hogarth agreed, writing at the bottom of the image: "Gin cursed Fiend with Fury fraught, / Makes human Race a Prey; / It enters by a deadly Draught, / And steals our Life away." Courtesy, Spencer Museum of Art, The University of Kansas (Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Dolph Simons, Jr.).

Source: Mancall, 1997, 22.

CHAPTER VII

UNFASHIONABLE RACISM

Just as technology is a salient issue to the construction of barworkers' identities, so too is race. Postmodern scholars have differentiated between postmodernism as a cultural turn versus postmodernism as an intellectual endeavor. Many "postmodernists," such as Jean Baudrillard, engage in the intellectual endeavors while lamenting the rise of the cultural forms. And though these intellectuals have written on the effects of this cultural turn on such ascribed characteristics as class, sexuality and gender, one issue on which they have been largely silent is race (though there have been some notable exceptions such as Lyotard's *Heidegger and The Jews*). This paper can be divided into two parts; in the first, I attempt to expound upon broad theoretical positions posited by scholars such as Jean Baudrillard, Jean-Francois Lyotard and Stjepan Mestrovic to compare the contentious identity politics between the Balkans of the 1990's and those of the United States today (or in other words, what has been called "the Balkanization of the West"). In the second part, I will attempt to illustrate the explanatory power of these models with an example of the social construction of race in the bar scene at Bryan/College Station in the Brazos county of Texas through historical research and content analysis of data collected from Texas A&M University's student newspaper, *The Battalion*. This chapter is largely descriptive of deep-seated cultural problems but I do not presume to have any solutions here and my aim is merely to illustrate the effect the last fin de siècle has had on the social construction of race. The arguments set forth are

not meant as justifications but theoretical examinations and explanations of the ironically priveledged perspectives of postmodern cultures on these important issues.

Due to the multitude of uses, academic and popular, that the term "postmodern" has been made to serve, any discussion dealing with "postmodern culture" must break with "orthodoxy" by discussing what is meant by the term despite postmodernists' aversion to categorization. Intimately tied with postindustrial nations' move from production-based to consumption-based economies, postmodern culture is marked by paralogy aimed at grand or meta-narratives such as enlightenment notions of science and history, delegitimation of truth and knowledge claims (or what Baudrillard refers to as the implosion of meaning and Lyotard discusses in terms of language games), the emergence of fractured and atomized identities (hence the claim that the self is dead), hostilities between subdivided groups along irrupted sites of meaning (what Mestrovic refers to as the process of Balkanization), the rise of postemotionalism (similar to Riesman's notion of other-directedness and Tocqueville's argument that Americans are like "adult children") and commodification and co-optation of once "othered" and "exoticized" cultural symbols. This list is by no means comprehensive and is meant only to serve as a launching platform for the following discussion.

The qualities of postindustrial cultures enumerated above raise many salient moral issues surrounding questions of power such as: How can ethics exist vis-à-vis the rejection of all grand narratives? How can justice? How can social wrongs stretching into the past have a hope of redress when history is denied? How can disenfranchisement and disempowerment be addressed when the very meaning of these

social ills is called into question and imploded the moment the issues reach a public forum? The solutions offered by postmodernists range from optimistic embracing of the differend and open communication to the simple and nihilistic response that they cannot.

Social theorist and modernist, Anthony Giddens (1990) has sparked controversy with his claim that postmodernity is a Western endeavor. While I disagree that postmodernity is only a Western project, I disagree because of the imposition of postmodern culture on disempowered groups (or, in other words, the imperialistic nature of Consumer Society—as Baudrillard argued in his book of that title: the code of consumeristic culture destroys all other life-forms to be replaced with that of the consumer—a form of cultural genocide). Specifically, in the contemporary United States, differences between varying racial groups' perspectives on race not only come from the disparaging social positions of power but also from the subsequently emerging postmodern and modern (respectively) stances of these groups. By implication then, taking a postmodern position in one's social outlook and behavior becomes linked with racialized expressions of power (those with social power are capable of taking postmodern stances after the "death of legitimacy" while disenfranchised groups cannot take these positions without losing political stances from which redress can be demanded—not granted but at least demanded).

The problem in even posing the above moral and ethical questions becomes evident when the response is inevitably to sidestep the question to question the framework of the question instead of the content. What is meant by this is that pluralistic responses that make perspectival contradictions based on the very asking of

the question and not the question itself (*i.e.*: "from *whose* point of view is *who* disenfranchised?") where there is a foreclosure of possible asking based upon format prior to the actual situation of the asking. The ultimate irony here is that the foreclosure is externally imposed, thus coming from a privileged postmodern perspective while *appearing* to deconstruct privilege simultaneously. Thus pluralism becomes a trompe-l'œil belying privileged positions. Mestrovic (1994) points out that countries that inherited their cultures from the Enlightenment (*i.e.*: The West) still play lip service to objectivity but believe they are the only ones capable of interpreting events around the world "objectively." Thus, in Mestrovic's personal example, someone from Croatia cannot "acurately" interpret the Balkan Wars because he is "biased."

Privilege is important here for another reason; in the absence of grand moral codes, those with power are always capable of justifying their behaviors because ethical standpoints become fluid. These cultural contradictions become contradictions in behavior. Two examples from the Balkan Wars illustrate this point: George Bush Sr. bombed Iraq at the end of his term to enforce U.N. sanctions while not responding to gross violations of U.N. sanctions by Serbia; to make the irony clearer, the New York Times published an article in 1992 claiming, "the world goes to war so Kuwait won't disappear, but Bosnia-Herzegovina disappears and the world does nothing" (found in: Mestrovic 1994: 6). And secondly, "Clinton bombed Iraq in June 1993 as an act of 'self-defense' justified by Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, but would not invoke the same article to allow Bosnian Muslims to defend themselves" (*Ibid*.). Thus

the moral positioning of those empowered in postindustrial societies allows shifting behavioral stances in response to varying contextual cues.

These ethical constructs embedded in postmodern cultures creates sites of tacit knowledge serving the reification of the status quo while maintaining an image of a political stance against social inequalities with "fake sincerity" or, as Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2003) put it in terms of race in the United States: "racism without racists" where racial discourse shifts to using language games revolving around culture reifying, in Joe Feagin's (2006) terms, "the white racial frame." Thus, just as following the dissolution of Yugoslavia, Serbs used recycled and shallow emotions, symbolized by their defeat by Turks at the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, to justify the alienation and later slaughter of Muslims and Croatians during the 1990's, whites in the US use the civil right's movement of the 1960's as a justification for the repealing of Affirmative Action laws today; explaining how Americans have argued, "we are all equal now" or "race no longer matters" just as Serbs referred to Croatians as "Catholic Serbs."

Moreover, the West responded to the Balkan War much the same way whites respond to disempowered racial groups, "everyone is equally guilty." Croatians, Muslims and Serbs were all blamed as being perpetrators of violence to justify Western inaction as many whites in America argue, "everyone is racist against someone" to justify racism or they may claim that while *some* whites are guilty of racial violence *in the past*, racial minorities are to blame for not seizing "opportunities" so generously offered by whites and for *choosing*, instead, poverty stricken, violent and/or criminal lives. Baudrillard argues that postmodern culture is empty and consists of recycled,

circulating fictions where formulaic, mediatized events are expected and seen as merely entertainment. Mestrovic refers to this as "the postmodernist (in terms of the cultural consumer) as voyeur" where those embedded in postindustrial cultures experience a breakdown of once firm boundaries between fact and fiction or what Baudrillard labels "hyper-reality." Entertainment is expected to have predictable scripts and when the images are not of predictable type-casted varieties the social positioning of those interjected into hyper-reality are denied. Take for example the social position of "victim" with its subsequent moral obligations. Postmodernists also expect victims to act like victims; it became difficult for Westerners to see the mass killings of Croatians and Muslims as genocide because the Croatians and Muslims were fighting back (Cushman and Mestrovic, 1996). In the West, when someone makes a claim of racial discrimination, they are dismissed as "playing the race card." The very act of resistance negates the possibility of being the victim because victims are seen to be passive and demure—by definition, they do not fight back. The problem here is obvious; the only other choice would be to do nothing and hope someone decides to play rescuer. One might ask why, in the face of obvious suffering, do people and nations who can stop it worry more about blame than aid? Baudrillard answers this by claiming that we (in the West) need victims; we need sufferers to consume their suffering as reality; as Baudrillard writes: "To re-create reality, one must go where the blood flows, and all these 'corridors' we have opened for our food and 'cultural' shipments are really emergency lifelines along which we import their life blood, and the energy of their misery…yet another unequal exchange" (*Ibid*., 81).

This loss or implosion of reality allows another aspect of postindustrial culture: ahistoricism. Thus, the West believed Serbian propaganda where Serbs became the protectors of Jews during WWII and Israel came out in support of the slaughter of Croatians as revenge against the Ustasha regime for being in bed with the Nazis. What is lost in this new "reality" is that the Serbs also supported the Nazis during the time. This justification was believed even though there was much more resistance against the Nazis in Croatia than in Serbia. As Philip J. Cohen (1999) reports, the partisan movement grew steadily in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia from 1941-1944 while its numbers were negligible in Serbia until late 1944 (96). The Serbian propaganda machine, however, had the West (including Israel) convinced that Serbs were the "friends of the Jews during WWII." This anachronistic fracturing along ethnic lines (or any perceived differences such as Orthodox versus Roman Catholic religious affiliations) also occurs in the West. Take for example movies about the Civil Rights era that focus on the deaths of white civil rights activists (read: whites were the "friends of blacks during the Civil Rights Movement").

This goes far beyond "image management" as what is being created is a sanitized political arena; in Europe, the Serbs were helping draw the boundaries for a "white Europe" ("ethnic cleansing") while in America, whites argue that it is only a few "backwards rednecks" who are racists but it is not the people wearing white sheets and burning crosses who have kept disenfranchised groups away from the same level of education, health care and occupational attainment as whites. As Baudrillard puts it, "The miraculous end will [seem to be] be at hand only when the exterminations come to

an end, and when the borders of "white" Europe have been drawn. It is as if all European nationalities and policies had acted in concert to take out a contract for murder with the Serbs, who have become the agents of the West's dirty jobs…" (Cushman and Mestrovic, 1996, 83). The old modernistic "dichotomy" of reality and illusion is at work here. The West gives lip-service to the celebration of diversity while giving de facto support to "ethnic cleansing" at home and abroad. The duality of these two positions is not an either/or but a both/and and is intimately tied to the irruption of difference in postmodern culture:

> Behind the facelifting of all categories in the name of their difference there always lurks contempt. 'There is nothing to prevent us thinking that a woman or a homosexual will one day become President,' declares an official candidate. As though elevation to the presidency would finally make a woman or a homosexual a full member of the human race! No doubt we must one day give the job to a blind albino Mongol with cancer. Already Miss America is deaf and dumb! (Baudrillard, 2002, 141).

But this postmodern focus on difference (as distinguished from modernist concepts of difference) creates difference while simultaneously denying the possibility of redressing the social inequalities endemic to our "enlightened" society. Difference also ceases to mean anything "real" as everybody becomes different and thus, for those who are already granted full membership in the human race, difference becomes an image you can consume or wear as a status symbol (such as whites who claim Native American heritage in order to receive tax exempt status or celebrities "consuming" minority children: Angelina Jolie adopted a Vietnamese boy, a Cambodian boy and Ethiopian

girl while Madonna adopted a Malawian boy who was not even an orphan against the father's wishes[31]).

Postmodern cultural citizens (as opposed to postmodern scholars) maintain a paradoxical position in Western culture: "we are all the same and equal," "race is just a bunch of fun consumable images" in the sense of Mestrovic's "culture of fun" (for example: African-Americans= do-rags, rap and "The Cosbys"; Mexican-Americans= mariachi bands and Taco Bell); while simultaneously maintaining a position of exclusion ("I don't want my child listening to violent, sexist rap but [violent, sexist] country is ok" or "I don't want anybody 'thugged-out' in my business [as stated by one of the interlocutors in my ethnographic chapter]" or "it's THEIR (whomever the they is in reference to) fault they aren't doing as well as 'everyone else'"). This racist, postemotional approach to social ascriptions is not new and the results of it, taken to its "logical" extreme can be seen in the Balkan War. Serbs instituted a policy of ethnic cleansing (genocide euphemistically) while claiming "we are all the same" and that their desire was for a unification of "Greater Serbia." This should serve as a startling warning against such postemotional and postmodern approaches to socially constructed concepts of "difference."

When discussing issues of morality and power both nationally and internationally in light of cultural shifts, this commodification of difference becomes particularly frightening because the emptiness of meaning that comes from consuming co-opted cultural images where that meaninglessness is imposed back upon the commodified

[31] Note that they are not adopting children from Russia or Western Europe—this is in line with Said's exoticized other.

group creates a situation where difference is perceived in terms of fads and fashion and any sites of political contention are imploded through this cultural lens. In Baudrillard's terms:

> What we ourselves have fallen victim to—and by no means allegorically—is a virus destructive of otherness. And we may predict that… no science will be able to protect us from this viral pathology which, by dint of antibodies and immune strategies, aims the extinction, pure and simple, of the other. Though, for the moment, this virus does not affect the biological reproduction of the species, it affects an even more fundamental function, that of the symbolic reproduction of the other, favoring, rather, a cloned, asexual reproduction of the species-less individual. For to be deprived of the other is to be deprived of sex, and to be deprived of sex is to be deprived of symbolic belonging to any species whatsoever (Baudrillard, 2002, 111-12).

We can see this in the Balkans where Serbs were "in" during the 1990's but now with Bush's invitation to Croatia to join NATO last year (2008) while not offering the same to Serbia, Croatia can be seen as the "cool" fad of that year. Another way to say this is that the narratives proffered by the media such as equality and liberty in terms of race are empty signs divorced of their signifiers. As Feagin writes, "Moderates in the white elite were ever more concerned about *the image* of the United States during and after both world wars in the twentieth century, for they had long heralded aggressively [but it needs to be added, selectively] the ideals of freedom and democracy against undemocratic enemies overseas" ([emphasis mine] 191). Thus ideals of freedom and democracy when applied to racial issues in the United States become PR ploys for the sake of a sanitized and artificial international image of America. The very emptiness of these images is an expression of power and domination emanating from the Western

white racial frame. Baudrillard (1999) poetically expresses this operation of racialized power in a section worth quoting at length:

> For the European, even today, America represents something akin to exile, a phantasy of emigration and, therefore, a form of interiorization of his or her own culture. At the same time, it corresponds to a violent extraversion and therefore to the zero degree of that same culture. No other country embodies to the same extent both this function of disincarnation and, at the same time, the functions of exacerbation and radicalization of the elements of our European cultures… It is by an act of force or *coup de théâtre*—the geographical exile of the Founding Fathers of the seventeenth century adding itself to the voluntary exile of [white] man within his own consciousness—that what in Europe had remained a critical and religious esotericism became transformed on the New Continent into a pragmatic exotericism. The whole foundation of America is a response to this dual operation of a deepening of the moral law in individual consciences, a radicalization of the utopian demand which was always that of the sects, and the immediate materialization of that utopia in work, custom, and way of life. …This material utopia of the way of life, where success and action are seen as profound illustrations of the moral law, was crystallized by exile and emigration and these have, in a sense, transformed it into a primal scene (75-6).

Baudrillard's use of "phantasy" is interesting in that he is implying both a fantasy and a phantasm or chimera; that whites (the "displaced" Europeans) wish to believe in America as a utopia so badly that it amounts to religious fervor helps explain the empty images of liberty and equality in terms of race offered not to disenfranchised minorities but to the international community. In this sense, whites can be ascribed with fake sincerity. This is the dual nature of the moral law; the rabid desire to believe in an American utopia and the simultaneous disempowerment (and then denial of disempowerment) blatantly foisted upon non-white groups. It also lends credence to the front stage behavior of social correctness and the backstage behavior of racism by whites. The "violent extraversion," the niceness, the desire to believe oneself "not-a-

racist" is part of this *coup de théâtre* of empty images while racism and the Western white framework is given legitimacy and moral authority by white controlled mass media (as one example). Moreover, racial epitaphs and "jokes" that are told by whites in mixed company or to a white friends illustrates how, in this sense, race is seen as an empty sign and whites are then surprised when their "jokes" offend their black friends and acquaintances.

In asserting that whites look at race as an empty sign is in no way meant to be an excuse or justification but an illustration of the blindness of those in power to those disempowered. In contradistinction, while whites can afford to commodify signs for the sake of signs due to their position of power (in other words their social power allows them to go down the rabbit hole of postmodernity), African-Americans are forced to remain in modernity (and in some cases premodern traditionalism) where signs and images have meaning. Otherwise, if blacks relinquished the modern notions of meaning, or in other words adopted white ethos, they would be further disempowered. As a black psychologist said quoted in Feagin (2006), "Black people are more spiritual…. We believe in relationships. I don't know whether it was African tradition, …what happened in America you had a lot of extended families, where there was a lot of love and concern and helping and working with, and trying to do for each other…. And see the white man's situation is very selfish, everything for him…" (223). The importance of extended kinship networks bolsters a sense of black identities as tied with meaningful relationships between people; the selfish individualism (or cult of the individual) that comes with empty symbols (I'm thinking of Susan Sontag bringing Beckett's "Waiting

for Godot" to Sarajevo as a particular example) stands as fundamentally antithetical to black ethos.

Whites also become incapable of understanding black ethos as it is tied with authentic meaning. As Feagin quotes one veteran police officer, "Some people used to say I was a troublemaker, I said, 'Troublemaker, how? What have I done to cause trouble? Because I won't let you say 'nigger' in front of me? That's a troublemaker?" (222). Words have meanings and historical contexts; whites, immersed in postmodernism (and as Gordon wrote, a fish can't see water), invoke race thinking that it is meaningless or that all those around them are also immersed in the same empty cultural trend as they (this argument does not apply to radical racists but to whites who "do not mean" to be racists—or "socially polite racists").

In a recent interview with political writer Bob Woodward on the inauguration of Barrack Obama as the 44th president of the US, Larry King illustrated how many white Americans think about race in terms of empty images or fashion: "Bob, my -- in that regard, my younger son Cannon, he is eight. And he now says that he would like to be black. I'm not kidding. He said there's a lot of advantages. Black is in. Is this a turning of the tide?" (Larry King Live, 1/21/09). Recall Baudrillard's assertion that a member of a particular disenfranchised group becoming president does not mean full inclusion as "a member of the human race." In other words, Obama becoming president does not suddenly mean that racism is over by any means—to illustrate this one needs only look to the arrest of Harvard professor, Henry Gates in his home in Cambridge in July of 2009. It does, however, lend credence to my assertion that people's understanding of

race in the US has changed. A child wanting to be black is similar to the child seeing a commercial for a particular brand of clothing and wanting to buy it—it is about image not substance. Normally, a child's whim would be hardly noteworthy but that Larry King told the story of his eight-year-old son's comment illustrates a broader understanding and meaning being constructed about race by the general population of the US.

As a satirical response to King's comment, on Jon Stewart's *Daily Show*, Larry Wilmore (the show's tongue-in-cheek "Senior Black Correspondent") drew attention to the reduction of racial and ethnic identities by postmodern culture to empty consumable images in the January 27, 2009 airing of the show:

> Wilmore: Black is in. That hasn't happened in a long time. Look we've had our moments; during the 60s we had civil rights- gave us a lot of buzz… [But the] Last time we were in was way back when we built the pyramids
> Stewart: I don't want to rain on that parade but I think you had us build the pyramids [Stewart is Jewish].
> Wilmore: Like I said, we were in! And now its happened again; in fact, I think it's gone a little too far-
> [cut to Oscar Awards]: And the nominees are Robert Downey Jr. in *Tropic Thunder*.
> [cut back to Wilmore]: a white guy gets an Oscar nomination for playing a black guy?! What are we, Hollywood's new retarded?!
> Stewart: Well no, I think its probably more positive than that. Larry King's son is not just saying 'black is in' he is literally saying, as an eight-year-old, "I would like to be black."

The movie, *Tropic Thunder* is an excellent example of the present discussion; whites used to dress up in "black-face" to demonize and make fun of African-Americans. Then the practice was acknowledged as racist and highly offensive; just as recently (relatively speaking) as 1993, actor Ted Danson came under heavy criticism for showing up at the

Friars Club Roast, being held in honor of Whoopi Goldberg, in black-face. Fifteen years later, however, Robert Downey Jr. in black-face is seen as comedic and titillating. Continuing from *The Daily Show*:

> Wilmore: Really? Ok, let's trade places: he can be black and I can be the son of a 90-year-old gazillionaire with a heart problem.
> Stewart: Larry, Larry, uh, I, I don't think…
> Wilmore: Ok, ok, he wants to be black? In that case I have some news to bring to him. Little King come close: Do you have any idea what you're talking about? Being black isn't about talking cool, you're gonna have to get a new hairstyle too and a wardrobe, I bet all your pants fit, don't they? Not good enough. Being black has a lot of challenges; you're going to have to figure out how to get your homework done at the tattoo parlor. Good luck. And guess what? Tyler Perry makes nine movies a year and you have to talk back to the screen during all of them but hey at least he gives you a break after a five-hour church service. Oh yeah, little homey- five hours, no air conditioning just fat ladies and paper fans. Is it fair? No. But you didn't choose to be black did you? Oh yeah, you did. Well have fun little brother; especially humoring all your white friends. Christ, that is exhausting.
> Stewart: Wait, you humor us?
> Wilmore: No, not you Jon. God, I am so tired.

Wilmore aptly satirizes the understanding of "being black" as being a mode of speech, a set of clothing worn and a handful of offensive stereotyped cultural behaviors. In ending the piece with his comment on "humoring white friends" speaks to the precarious position of minorities in relation to broader cultural processes of co-optation and commodification where black identities become *the* buyable black identity that anyone can consume based on the arbitrary fluctuations of style and taste.

As can be seen by the parallels drawn between racial minorities in the US and the Balkan Wars of the 1990's, racism and ethnocentrism is not, as many race scholars seem to imply, just about black and white. In this chapter, I have and will continue to focus more on the impetuses and processes rather than just the consequences. Othering

processes modern and postmodern have similar consequences in the sense of denying opportunities and social access to disenfranchised groups. Much like Baudrillard's metaphor of the virus (discussed above), however, studying only the consequences of a virus (that the person is sick) will not allow a researcher to create effective medicine; racism and ethnocentrism is a social ill that has evolved. Social scientists who approach issues of social othering from a modernist approach are missing the ways that racism and ethnocentrism has changed over the past sixty years. We are standing at an historical moment where race is understood (outside the ivory tower) in terms of other cultural artifacts as empty images or "fashion" instead of the politically contentious understandings of race found in the modern era. This is not to say, however, that race is not still as salient a social issue as it was in the past, just that it is potent and sociologically important in a different way today.

Micro-Level Example: Race, History and Violence in College Station, TX

In this light, events occurring in 2005 around the North Gate end of Texas A&M University (where the main strip of bars is located) where certain minorities have been denied access to local bars due to "dress code violations" fit within larger sociological or cultural patterns. For instance, bars with dress codes include violations such as do-rags and sagging pants, which symbolize, from a racialized framework, African-Americans. This represents a Balkanization of College Station in terms of local tastes in appearance (or, as I contend, postmodern expressions of racism). This current expression of racialized action is different from past racists action in the area where race was

understood to be ontologically fundamental to one's life because of the assumed fluidity and choice surrounding the notion of race as "fashion."

Racialized exclusion is not new to the Brazos county. Historian Cynthia Skove Nevels, in her work *Lynching to Belong: Claiming Whiteness through Racial Violence*, looks at the violent identity politics that played out during the "new immigration" of Italians, Irish, Bohemians and Jews who occupied a kind of racialized social limbo at the end of the nineteenth century where the only two possibilities were black or white. As Baudrillard argues, for one group to move up the social hierarchy, another group must either move down or be held down by the social climbing group as was the case with the Irish, Italian, Bohemians and Jews in Bryan/College Station who "proved" their "whiteness" by lynching blacks. This is akin to Serbs "lynching" Croats and Muslims during the Balkan War to "prove" their "Europeanness."

If someone is to make the argument that lay understandings of racial and ethnic identities have changed between the modern and postmodern eras and use a particular local area as an example of broader social phenomena, it is important to look at historical expressions and constructions of racial and ethnic identities in the same area. Brazos County has a long history of racial and ethnic violence and exclusion particularly along the contested line of whiteness with its "prize" of racial privilege. Racialized violence in the area often arose out of political and economic unrest where disenfranchised groups suffered as scapegoats for other groups' frustration and anger. For instance, in the summer of 1896 tensions were running high due to the destruction of the cotton compress and low crop yields leading to a projected economic downturn and

in the town of Kurten there were political tensions between the African-American republican block and the democratic voting German population. Out of this environment three black men, one accused of raping an Italian women and two of attempting to rape a young white girl, were lynched in June by a mob led by, as described by the sheriff, men of questionable character. The ambiguous description of the mob leaders is taken by Skove to imply Germans who were not considered white. The men, however, never saw a trial, pointing in the direction of white privilege for an ethnic group that had not yet become white (Nevels, 2007).

The Balkanization of Brazos County occurred with increased immigration into the area while the whites of the county did not have ready-made racial identities with which to categorize the immigrants:

> The very definition of white, and who qualified as white, was about to be seriously questioned. By the time Steele asked for the post office [in 1878], all sorts of strange-speaking newcomers were beginning to show up in the area, and they were neither southern-born whites nor African Americans. First came a trickle of Czech-speaking Bohemians in the 1870s, and a small but growing number of Italians joined them during the 1880s. By the 1890s large numbers of Italians and Bohemian Czechs were moving into the country en masse, and most of them were renting and even buying land in or near the Mudville area, in the northwestern corner of the county. Smaller communities of Italians and Bohemians were also being established in the northeastern area of the county, but by far the largest concentrations were near the Brazos River (*Ibid*., 28).

Within the dichotomous racial categories of the time, it must have seemed to these new arrivals that their own identities could go either way and that they must do anything to avoid becoming black.

It is not necessary, here, to go into depth on each instance of racial violence perpetrated against African Americans by the various ethnic groups that immigrated to

Brazos County at the end of the nineteenth century; the important point here for my argument is, "…the political backdrop against which these lynchings took place and the ways in which race and southern politics were so intimately connected. … They [the new immigrants], and especially their children, would be among the chief beneficiaries of the Democrats' consolidation of political power at the end of the nineteenth century and of the seeming social equality among whites that racial violence wrought" (*Ibid*., 67). The many ethnic groups that came to the Brazos County were able to become white by assimilating to a racial structure of which they were not originally a part (in terms of being neither white nor black). In order to climb to the top of the social hierarchy in the area, people in these groups engaged in political oppression of blacks (such as blocking black voters at the poles) as well as serving as witnesses against blacks in courts. The groups were able to rise socially by and be assimilated by white society by pushing and helping hold African American citizens down.

Unlike the Brazos county's past where racial and ethnic minorities attempted to claim whiteness through the participation and occasional instigation of violence on African-Americans, the period of racial controversy surrounding the bars on North Gate emerged out of an attempt to impose the style, performance and fashion of dominant mainstream culture on racial and ethnic minorities by whites (some of whom, ironically, are descended from the ethnic minority groups of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Nevels discusses); in other words, it is a forced homogenization according to the "law" of the smallest marginal difference (Baudrillard, 2004). In the fall semester of 2005, African-American and international students claimed that they were being denied

entrance to some bars on North Gate or were charged higher covers to enter than white students.[32] *The Battalion* covered the events and the subsequent actions taken by some conscientious students fairly extensively. The earliest article dealing with the events was published September 22, 2005,

> The Library, a bar on North Gate, charges cover prices based on race, said a recent Texas A&M graduate who wished to remain anonymous in order to speak more freely about the event. "Me and a group of friends went to North Gate the night of graduation," she said. "Our group was mostly black people and a couple of Hispanics. At the door, the black girls were told cover price was $3, and the guys were told cover price was anywhere from $15 to $20. Later we noticed a discrepancy when the doorman let a white girl in the door for free. I also talked to a black girl who was charged $3 while her white best friend was let in the door at no charge." (Baker, "North Gate Bar Accused of Racial Prejudice")

The student went on to complain to the manager who subsequently asked her to leave. This first article served as a catalyst for a local scandal with victims and witnesses coming forward with stories of discrimination as well as apologists and discrimination deniers writing opinion pieces and letters to the editor. A debate raged across the campus of Texas A&M University as well as North Gate about racist practices on North Gate but the debate went out with a whimper and things quickly settled down with no major sanctions occurring against the bars in question. An interesting aspect of the comments published by the student newspaper and those being made around campus and North Gate was the way race was being discussed and understood by students and how these comments pointed to a postmodern understanding of race as discussed in the first part of this chapter.

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[32] It is important to note that not all of the bars on North Gate were accused of such practices and much of the focus of the charges was on one bar in particular, The Library, owned by Costa Dallis.

It is important to note that while the majority of incidents were along the lines of denying entrance to potential patrons, modernistic expressions of racism and xenophobia through violence were also reported such as the case of Ravi Mallipedi, an Indian graduate student, who was beaten with a baseball bat on North Gate (Baker, "Leaders Work to Increase North Gate Safety"). Such incidents are horrendous but not the focus of my argument here as such occurrences leave no room for popular debate, only condemnation and are the actions of extremists. I am interested in those who practice a more subtle kind of racial and ethnic oppression or who Bonilla-Silva calls, "color-blind racists."

Over the course of the semester, incidents of minority students being denied entrance or charged extra continued to pile up and complaints continued to pour in to the Student Government and the offices of student affairs, leading even the Vice President of student affairs to comment that there must be some veracity to the allegations (Watkins, 10/4/05, "Loaded"). Most often, the justification for not allowing particular students into the bars was cited as "dress-code violations" and thus the bar owners and other defenders claimed that the practice was not an issue of race but of fashion and taste. As *The Battalion* reported:

> Costa Dallis, owner of The Library, said the allegations were the result of people's misunderstanding of the bar's policy. According to The Library's rules and regulations, which are posted on its window outside the bar, cover charge is determined by the customer's age, sex, the time of night the customer is trying to enter and if there is a special event. The sign also displays the bar's dress code, which bans sports attire, baggy clothes, backwards baseball caps and do-rags. T-shirts are discouraged and are approved on a case-by-case basis. Plain shirts are not allowed regardless of color, the sign reads. Dallis said he has photos of minorities inside his bar, which he offered to show to anyone who believes The Library is

> racist. "I don't know how many times I can say it until I am blue in the face: We do not discriminate under any circumstance," he said. "I think people are being really quick to cry wolf. Every night, there are people of every ethnicity who do get in and don't get in. People are just jumping on the bandwagon with their accusations right now" (*Ibid*.).

It is interesting to note that part of the defense against the charge of discrimination is an admission to other forms of discrimination (age and sex); while there is no logical sense to the defense, there is a cultural logic to it. As I discuss in the chapter "Reel Life," the bar scene is hyper-masculinized and considering that North Gate is in the middle of a college town, most of the patrons are barely (or not at all) old enough to legally drink; thus sexism and ageism become culturally acceptable (in terms of the bar culture on North Gate) while accusations of racial and ethnic discrimination must be defended. Another issue with the above defense (as noted earlier in the chapter) is the kinds of clothing singled out are stereotyped racialized fashion markers (excepting the plain shirts ban). May and Chaplin (2008) extend this discussion in their study of cultural codes and access to nightclubs in downtown Athens, GA. They argue that dress codes posted outside of such social spaces are not only a matter of cultural tastes in terms of race but also class. They cite the ability of middle-class African-Americans to "crack the code" and gain access by wearing "Polos" and "button-down shirts." While I agree with May and Chaplin that class (and particularly the intersections of class and race) is an important factor in transmitting cultural codes that either gain one access or denial of access, I argue that broader American popular culture contains racialized images that isolate race from class not in terms of application (*i.e.*: denial of access) but in terms of cultural understandings of race on the part of whites. In other words, as May and

Chaplin aptly point out, the idea of a "black cultural essence" is a myth; however, the myth is still believed and as such is important for understanding whites' constructions of race. Furthermore, as pointed out by Bonilla-Silva (2003), making claims of being "color-blind" by pointing to minority friends (or in this case patrons) has become a normalized discourse used by those in social positions of power to combat charges of discrimination. Bonilla-Silva describes such arguments as part of the arsenal used by "color-blind racists" to deny the existence of racism. It is clear, however, that minorities having been capable of entering the bar at times does not mean that discriminatory practices were absent.

Some may argue that bar owners claiming that denying entrance to certain people over fashion, not race or ethnicity is merely a trope and does not illustrate a shift in popular understandings of race, I agree that it is difficult to determine intention and levels of sincerity, however, even if it is a trope, it marks a change in how race is discussed if not how it is understood. Many of the arguments put forth, particularly by students, though, appear to be believed by their purveyors:

> I am a minority and have attended almost every bar and club in College Station and have never witnessed any kind of racism. A certain understanding needs to be taken in [sic] by individuals who choose to use the racist card. If you want to dress in regular casual clothes, go to the Tap, Salty Dog, Carney's, or other bars at North Gate [as a note of clarification, the only bar this writer lists that is actually on North Gate is The Tap and the other two bars are not in College Station but neighboring Bryan]. If you want to dress to impress then go to the Library, Studio Lounge, Gatsby's or V-Bar. It is a simple concept. Businesses do have a right to refuse services to anyone they want. Especially if you dress poorly, smell, or any of the other things I've witnessed, not only at the bars/clubs but on campus. And when I say this, it means that if we were to take a random sample and the majority of that sample said you smelled or dressed poorly, then you probably do. People treat you the way they

> see you. How would you go into a business meeting? Other businesses such as Supercuts practice this rule, but nobody says they're racist. In closing, if these bars are so racist then why do I still see so many fat and ugly people at the bar, seriously think about that one. We live in a society where looks do matter whether you like it or not, so think about it (Moreno, 10/6/05, "Bars Not Racist, Appearance Gets You In").

The above quote from a student at Texas A&M University serves as an excellent example of how race and ethnicity is understood differently today in terms of empty symbols such as fashion. What this student is proposing is an extermination of the self. As Baudrillard reminds us in so many of his works, the old Marxists concern of the reification of the body at least still allows for the existence of the body; what we see here is the body after the commodity has been consumed. The regurgitated body that must conform to the cultural, consumptive code of easily digestible images: How dare you not wear the right clothes! How dare you smell different than every westerner smells! How dare you be fat or ugly! Don't you realize you must want to be consumed? Don't you know that there is no longer any difference between leisure and work? Going to party out with friends requires you to dress as though you were going to a business meeting—there is no such thing as casual when it is also your cultural duty to consume others as they consume you, to smile, to have straight, white teeth, to have the appropriate labels on display, to demonstrate that you bow to a daily ritual of attempted self extinction in the Temple of Gold's. One almost thinks the author has forgotten that her topic was about race, but she hasn't—even race must bow to the dictates of fad. As Baudrillard (2002) wrote, "The liquidation of the Other is accompanied by an artificial synthesis of otherness—a radical cosmetic surgery of which cosmetic surgery on faces and bodies is merely a symptom. For the crime is perfect only when even the traces of

the destruction of the Other have disappeared" (115). Being black or Indian is equivalent to being fat and ugly in 2005 on North Gate but it is "not racist" but about "appearance." The body autocracy of mass media is no longer just about how much you weigh or where on your face your nose happens to be positioned.... And thus the victims are blamed—it is their fault they were exiled and made the other—their "look" was out of style.

In a postmodern culture, epistemology dies as meaning implodes. As Baudrillard (2002) argues, thought and reality exist as two separate poles creating a singularity of an event where it is singular in the denial of otherness beyond arbitrary signs divorced of signifiers:

> At all events, there is incompatibility between thought and the real. There is no sort of necessary or natural transition from one to the other. Neither alternation, nor alternative: only otherness and distance keep them charged up. This is what ensures the singularity of thought, the singularity by which it constitutes an event, just like the singularity of the world, the singularity by which it too constitutes an event (96).

The happenings on North Gate in 2005 fired a debate not on what to do about racism and xenophobia in a college town but whether racism and xenophobia "actually" occurred in the reported examples. If there were just a few students who made claims of discrimination then it leaves open the *possibility* that they had had too many drinks and thus were not allowed into bars concerned with TABC laws against allowing intoxicated people into bars (as discussed in "Identity Construction in Bar Work") or because of some dress code. Now this is certainly naïve considering overt acts of racism such as the beating of international students but it is at least a plausible interpretation. When bar workers from the bars in question, however, come forward to corroborate accusations it

would seem clear that racist practices and not TABC or a dress code are the cause of discrimination and the issue of fashion is a trope:

> Two employees of the Library, a bar on North Gate, have come forward with allegations of racism against the Library. One employee said he routinely witnesses discrimination at the front door. At times, the bar also temporarily changes the style of music it plays in hopes of keeping Black people from entering the bar, he said. Another employee told The Battalion in a letter that he has witnessed discrimination by doormen "coming from personal prejudice, and some instructions passed down from management of different establishments" (Watkins, "Discrimination in Library Collaborated," 10/12/05).

This, however, does not contradict my assertion that the North Gate example illustrate a wider change in lay understanding of race in America as these positions in the debate become assertions of positions oriented around questions of racial identities within the cultural discourses not racialized identities as they relate to oppression or disenfranchisement. In other words, the positions are about positions of "not-racist, but others are" versus "racism does not exist;" in this way the very positions become part of these contested images. Soon after these two bar workers came forward another, an African-American manager, came forward to deny the claims:

> I am writing this letter in response to the recent allegations against Costa Dallis' business practices and against the Library at North Gate. I am a black male attending graduate school at Texas A&M. I have been going to North Gate for four years. I am not naive enough to believe that racial prejudice does not take place, but I can say that Mr. Dallis' bar personnel do not racially profile any of their customers. My personal experience has found the Library on North Gate to be one of the most racially diverse clubs/bars in College Station. I know this not only from being a regular customer at the Library, but also as a former door manager. During my tenure at the Library, I was never instructed to discriminate against anyone in regards to admittance to the bar/club. I believe these recent accusations to be preposterous and feel that a thorough investigation of the facts is necessary before accusations of racial discrimination are made (Johnson, "Library Worker Never Told to Discriminate," 10/26/05).

Once again, the "truth" of the situation cannot be known. Representatives of one side are produced as experts (in this context, "expert" would be bar workers) who have face credibility then the other group produces their own expert to repudiate the former (in this case the denial of racism is even more effective because the expert is a minority thus lay readers of the student newspaper further disbelieve any possibility of legitimation of the accusations).

Some students who projected the "not racist, but others are" image met several times with North Gate bar owners and managers to discuss the situation and threatened to boycott and take legal action against the bars. The goal of this group of students (including prominent members of the student government) was interesting; according to the Student Government Association Executive Vice President at the time, Crystal Y'Barbo, the group was "trying to fix *the perception* of discrimination [emphasis mine]" (Weddle, "Students Work for North Gate Response," 10/31/05). The emphasis on perception over "actuality" is important; it allows the group to sidestep the question of racism by focusing on the image. In this way, epistemology and political legitimation is also sidestepped. By attempting to combat images with more images, the debate can be continued but nothing can be "solved" in the sense of modernistic political positions and social movements. The postmodern strategy of images also validates, through homogenization of approach and style, the position of bar owners denying accusations of discrimination. The two discursive positions even become imploded as demonstrate by bar owner, Dallis' re-appropriation of the "not racist, but others are" image:

> The Library is more minority-friendly than other locations on North Gate, Costa Dallis said Wednesday. "Five years ago, I opened a bar that was minority-friendly when the rest of the area really wasn't," said Dallis, owner of four North Gate locations. "We're under the microscope because we do let minorities in" (Miles, "North Gate Bar Owner Says His Bar Is Minority-Friendly," 12/1/05).

As the above quote illustrates a re-appropriation of the discrimination discourse but also the discourse of victims (who is the victim? Are there victims?) surrounding the debate. Not only are any truth-claims immediately imploded but even the form of the discursive positions. Dallis puts on the image of "not racist, but others are" while claiming to be victimized by minorities for not being racist. The argument, again, does not make any logical sense; it does, however, maintain a cultural logic of linguistic singularity with the event (Baudrillard, 2002).

In continuing with the discursive "flip," both claims the role of the victim for his bar and claims a disenfranchised position to deflect accusations:

> "I have admitted people with passports who look like they're 45, and I have not admitted people who look like they're 20, even if their passport says they're 25," Dallis said. "I'm Greek. My father is a first-generation immigrant. I have no problem with international folks." The Library has turned down people because they were not appropriately dressed, but the dress code and admittance policy are posted in the front window, visible to everyone, Dallis said. "I agree that different cultures have different styles of dress," he said. "We try to run the cleanest bar we can. I've been to clubs in larger cities and not been let in. It can happen to anybody" (Miles, "North Gate Bar Owner Says His Bar Is Minority-Friendly," 12/1/05).

There are several issues here. There is a connection between modernistic expressions of racism in Brazos county's history but the difference is that while the new immigrants claimed whiteness to separate from disenfranchised identities; here, Dallis is claiming "Greek-ness" instead of whiteness as the privileged position in order to wear an image of

someone who has ancestral connections with disenfranchised groups. This also illustrates the continuance of Balkanization in postmodern culture, the important difference being, however, would be the addition of race as personalization or Baudrillard's "smallest margin of difference." There is a major discursive slip here, however, it is the idea that running "the cleanest bar we can" is antithetical to non-American cultures. This is connected with the earlier quote regarding smell. The xenophobic emphasis on Western practices of hygiene rituals highlights that the notion of image and fashion here is not merely visual but encompasses the senses. Moreover, the assumption that one cannot be "clean" unless conforming to Western notions of body construction illustrates another aspect of the homogenization of other lifeways into mainstream presentations of self.

Dallis' assertion that being denied entrance into a bar can happen to anyone (the message being, "don't take it personally") is an assumption of underlying equality despite any other perceived difference. This is the position of the lottery player- the ultimate form of illusory democracy. Anyone can be in this position; we really are all equal:

> Everything begins, in Borges's fiction, with chance being collectively put into power, with statuses, fortunes and the social game being randomly redistributed: the Lottery. As a result, each existence becomes singular, incomparable and free of logical determination. And yet—it works. Everyone ends up preferring this to the traditional social game, which was itself, in any case, also doomed to arbitrariness. Now, the objective arbitrariness of chance—open indeterminacy—is preferable to the masked illusion of free will. Everyone ends up preferring to be 'just anyone', at the Lottery's whim; ends up preferring to have an accidental destiny rather than a personal existence. We have, in any case, become 'just anyone' today. But we have become so shamefacedly, in our statistical promiscuity, our collective monotony, instead of being so with

> brilliance, being free, by a decree that comes from elsewhere (Baudrillard, 2002, 91-2).

Everyone has equal chance of being denied access and thus no one has a legitimate claim of disenfranchisement. A person, in a position of social power, who denies access to someone will him or herself be denied access at a later point. As long as denial remains circular and "democratic" then it is justified. As Baudrillard points out above, this is based on, in part, our obsession with statistics. Ceteris Paribus, "all things being equal" allows for the perception of randomness in social forms regardless of collectivities.

> In communication, by crowding and perpetual interaction, individuals suffer the same fate—the same absence of fate. Communication totally screens out the radiations of otherness. To preserve the strangeness between people, that personal destiny of a 'singularity of some kind' (G. Agamben), to break down that 'social' programming of exchange which equalizes destinies, all one can do is introduce the arbitrariness of chance, or of the rules of a game. Against the automatic writing of the world, the automatic de-programming of the world (*Ibid*., 92).

Despite such movements as multi-culturalism, claims against the existence of racism often take the form of claiming similarity and a denial of otherness. This allows the perpetuation of disenfranchisement while denying possibilities of redress due to the perceived singularity of positions under the banner of simulacra. Thus, bars on North Gate are not racist, they are merely the fashion police.

Finally, postmodern positions to activism and questions of legitimation are often marked by ennui or apathy, and a tacit complicity for the status quo. The prevalence of ennui is bolstered and justified, to those in such positions, by the death of epistemology and resistance to empathy for disenfranchised groups in a "culture of fun" (Mestrovic, 1997).

> I just wanted to say good luck to the student leaders in arranging a boycott against North Gate bars. I'm sure people are going to stop going to The Corner bar just because Jim Carlson's [the Student Body President at the time] friend wasn't allowed in. Apparently the guy's eyes were bloodshot so the bouncers thought he was too drunk to enter the bar. I probably would have done the same thing if I were them. I'm not going to stop going to The Corner bar because the bouncers made an honest mistake. I have an idea though. How about our student body president starts focusing on actual student problems at A&M rather than discreditable claims of discrimination off campus. If the student leaders want to arrange a boycott, they can count me out. While they are spending their weekends racking their brains trying to search for discrimination problems that don't even exist, I will be enjoying myself at bars such as the Library and The Corner (Anderson, "Good Luck to Overzealous Leadership," 11/2/05).

The lack of legitimation of politicized stances ("discreditable claims of discrimination") leads not only to a distrust of these stance and possible sites of resistance but also to a high level of apathy for questions of ethics, morality and justice. If one were to admit the historical legitimacy and present-day continuance of racism and ethnocentrism based on still salient racialized identities in the United States then such an admission/realization necessitates a response. The relegation of race to another empty image allows for claims of the end of racism in spite of still prevalent social effects of the persistent existence of racism.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY

I have no conclusion here. This project is about a different, inclusive approach to methodology and is an attempt at painting a portrait of barworkers in local as well as global patterns of culture. I have referred to a "pastiche" approach but this is not to be confused with the concept of pastiche as a mixing of decontextualized and anachronistic cultural artifact to create a nihilistic hodgepodge. I am using pastiche here to refer to dynamic and fluid cultural patterns that are contradictory and necessarily incomplete. I also mean the term as an aspect of Nietzschean perspectivism where many different stances are taken to see a continually partial and picture perpetually in the process of becoming.

I also, epistemologically speaking, am borrowing from Nisbet's argument that classical sociological theory coming from the Nineteenth Century was engaged in painting "portraits" and that sociology, as a discipline, owes as much to the field of art as it does science. Unfortunately, this part of sociology's history has been lost in much contemporary practices of sociology as science has come to predominate. In this study, I am engaged in painting a portrait, in the above sense, of barworkers. The construction of whose identity is embedded in and emerges from, as most identities are and do, many salient sociological phenomena such as race, gender, sexuality, (re)presentations in popular culture and broad historical and cultural patterns. Moreover, I argue that we are living in a postmodern culture marked by fragmentary selves and social and communal dis-locations leading to contradictions and social insecurities (such as with Riesman's

"other-directed" social character type). Questions of knowledge and meaning are particularly important here and how meaning can be created vis-à-vis an otherwise nihilistic culture is of particular concern to constructions of identities and sociological methodologies. I suggest that sociologists embrace the postmodern "tenet" that "all is text" and that we, as "scientists" and "artists" create meaning and do not "discover" it "out there."

As much as this embracing is possible from a Nietzschean perspectivism, I have conducted several studies from widely different points of view. In "Identity Construction in Bar Work," I conduct an ethnography conducted through open-ended interviews and participant observation (having worked in a bar on Northgate in College Station, Texas for about two years). I argue that barworkers on Northgate exist within several levels of collective consciousnesses from the state to the city to Texas A&M University to Northgate and finally individual bars. These various patterns of socio-cultural life create dis-locations between fractured identities (such as barworker and student) and lead to the construction of identities that are often paradoxical (such as bar cultures being simultaneously Apollonian and Dionysian).

In "A Reel Life Less Ordinary," I do a textual analysis looking at (re)presentations of barworkers and salient reference groups in film. Here, I compare past inner-directed depictions of barworkers in movies such as *Casablanca* with other-directed ones such as *Coyote Ugly* and argue that shifts in film parallel cultural shifts to the ascendancy of empty images and circulations of fictions. I am particularly interested

in constructions of gender and sexuality in bar movies and how the hyper-masculinity and latent homoerotica of these films and bar culture "reflect" one another.

In "The Medium is the Bar Experience," I use formal theory and positivistic methodology to argue that the ascendancy of technology in our culture is connected with anomic social "forms." I propose that the ubiquitous presence of such technologies as cell phones, TVs and video games decrease the amount of social interaction ironically in arenas constructed historically for communal interactions. This study is also a critique of positivistic approaches to postmodern cultural phenomena and highlights the issues in constructing meaning from categorical positions.

In "Shifting/Shattering Epistemes," I take a historical comparative approach based on modified versions of Nietzschean genealogies and Foucauldian nonlinear histories to look at the development of the inclusion, culturally, of technologies in bars. I focus on four such epistemes: taverns in the colonies and early United States, saloons in Nineteenth Century America, speakeasies during Prohibition and bars after the postmodern turn. I argue that postmodern bars represent a fundamental and ahistorical shift away from the social focus of bars in the past due, in part, to the rise of "actant technologies."

Finally, in "Unfashionable Racism," I approach issues of racism and ethnocentrism in postmodern cultures from historical comparative, content analysis and cultural textual analysis methodologies to argue that barworkers in local arenas such as Bryan/College Station engage in contentious identity politics on global scales. What is meant by this is that charges of racism and the subsequent debates that occurred on

Northgate in 2005 can be seen in broader contexts of Balkanization. Race and ethnicity in postmodern culture becomes understood by dominant groups arguing "we are all equal" as empty images analogous to fashion. This argument is connected with larger argument such as the reduction of politics to aesthetics. In this way, minorities were denied access to certain bars on Northgate under the argument that they "violated the dress code" but not in terms of modernistic expressions of racism. These incidents are also situated in local history through a brief analysis of how whiteness was claimed in the area by "New Immigrants" at the end of the Nineteenth Century.

Again, I am not making any overarching conclusions here and this portrait of barworkers is necessarily incomplete. Many other aspects could be explored. But the dis-locations discussed here are particularly salient perspectives from which to attempt to construct meaning from the constructions of barworkers' identities.

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Publications

BOOK

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